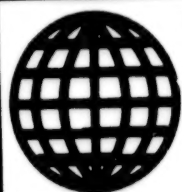


JPRS-NEA-92-033
20 MARCH 1992



**FOREIGN
BROADCAST
INFORMATION
SERVICE**

JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

Near East & South Asia

JPRS-NEA-92-033

CONTENTS

20 March 1992

NEAR EAST

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

'Intellectuals' Condemn U.S. 'Imperialist Plan' [Tripoli JANA]	1
Sudanese-Libyan Cooperation in Oil Venture [Omduran Radio]	1
Libyan-Egyptian Petroleum Officials Hold Talks [Cairo MENA]	1
Saudi Government Approves Tax Agreement With Libya [Riyadh SPA]	1
Paper Criticizes Lack of Libyan Support for Iraq [Amman AL-RA'Y 2 Mar]	2
Ramadan Receives New Libyan Charge D'Affaires [Iraq Radio]	2
Mideast Airlines Lose \$700 Million [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 1 Feb]	2
GCC Official on Arab Economic Plan [London AL-HAYAH 5 Feb]	3
Importance of German Ties To Maghreb Discussed [Casablanca MAROC SOIR 19 Feb]	4

ALGERIA

FIS Members: Alternative for Youth [EL WATAN 25 Jan]	4
FIS Activity at Bab-Ezzouar University [Paris LIBERATION 14 Feb]	7
New Ministerial Appointments: Some 'Unexpected' [Paris LE MONDE 25 Feb]	7
Reaction to Government Reshuffling Reported	8
Political Parties Respond [EL WATAN 24 Feb]	8
Citizens' Response 'Skeptical' [EL WATAN 24 Feb]	10
Iran Said Trying To Destabilize Muslim World [EL MOUDJAHID 22 Feb]	10
Importance of Financial Aid Discussed [Paris LE MONDE 22 Feb]	11
Detention Centers: EC Ties Aid to Human Rights [Paris LE MONDE 19 Feb]	12
Risks Posed by State of Emergency Suggested [Paris LE MONDE 11 Feb]	13

JORDAN

Analysis of Proposed Jordanian Military Reduction [Tel Aviv BAMAHAANE 22 Jan]	13
---	----

KUWAIT

Defense Minister on Gulf Security, Iranian Ties [London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI 26 Feb]	15
---	----

MAURITANIA

Foreign Minister Discusses Maghreb Issues [Casablanca AL-ITTihad AL-ISHTIRAKI 19 Feb] ..	16
--	----

SUDAN

Price Increases Announced, Justified	18
Bread, Fuel Prices Up [SUNA 3 Feb]	18
Domestic Airfares Up [SUNA 9 Feb]	19
Nation Hurt by Subsidies [SUNA 9 Feb]	19
Al-Bashir Defends Policy [SUNA 5 Feb]	19
Minimum Wage Raised [SUNA 2 Feb]	20

TUNISIA

Ben Ali Authorizes Religious Affairs Ministry [Tunis Radio]	20
Unionist Democratic Union Leader Meets Ben Ali [Tunis Radio]	20
Agency for External Liaison Appoints New Director [Tunis Radio]	20

Interior Minister Says Al-Nahdah Remains Active [London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI 28 Feb]	21
Union Expresses Appreciation for Government Agreements [Tunis Radio]	21
Government Requires Passports for Travel to Libya [Tunis Radio]	21
MDS President Discusses Party Status, Islamists [REALITES 14 Feb]	21

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Early Budget Figures Show Imminent Deficit [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 3 Mar]	24
Parliamentarians Welcome Saudi Shura Council [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 3 Mar]	25

WESTERN SAHARA

Italian Union Ready To Help Tindouf 'Prisoners' [Rabat L'OPINION 7 Feb]	26
Camp Conditions: Delegation Visits Florence [Rabat L'OPINION 10 Feb]	27
Tindouf: Situation 'Untenable,' Killings Reported [Rabat L'OPINION 11 Feb]	27
Conditions in Camps at Tindouf, Lahmada Exposed	28
Family Members Held [Rabat L'OPINION 13 Feb]	28
Low Morale, Malnutrition Reported [Rabat L'OPINION 7 Feb]	28
Conditions Termed 'Inhumane' [Rabat L'OPINION 6 Feb]	28
Opposition Daily on Western Sahara Referendum [MAP]	29

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Foreign Minister on Reconciliation With Neighbors [London AL-HAWADITH 21 Feb]	29
---	----

SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

Economic Protocol Signed With China [THE KABUL TIMES 11 Jan]	32
Officials, Business Leaders Discuss Economic Issues [THE KABUL TIMES 9 Jan]	32
Measures To Counter Narcotics Threat Viewed [THE KABUL TIMES 1 Jan]	33
Mujahidin Arms Depot Blown Up [THE KABUL TIMES 2 Jan]	34
Benihesar-Shiwaki Road To Be Repaired [THE KABUL TIMES 7 Jan]	34
Chamber of Commerce Lends Credit for Imports [THE KABUL TIMES 6 Jan]	34

NEPAL

New Panchayat-Based Party Said To Retain Image [THE MOTHERLAND 11 Feb]	35
New Political Party Said To Have No Base [THE RISING NEPAL 11 Feb]	35
Problems of Administering Tribhuva University Examined [THE RISING NEPAL 1 Feb]	36
Television Broadcast Capabilities Reviewed [THE RISING NEPAL 2 Feb]	38
Commentaries Review New Five-Year Economic Plan	38
Too Free Market Oriented [THE RISING NEPAL 14 Feb]	38
Too Many Government Controls [THE RISING NEPAL 4 Feb]	40
Population Control Falls Short [THE RISING NEPAL 14 Feb]	42

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

'Intellectuals' Condemn U.S. 'Imperialist Plan'

LD1702142192 Tripoli JANA in English 1450 GMT
16 Feb 92

[Text] Rabat, Al Nawwar [Feb] 16, JANA—Upon the initiative of the National Council for Arab Culture, a group of Arab intellectuals this held a meeting in Rabat to discuss the new colonial campaign against the Great Jamahiriya. The meeting decided to set up a committee from 12 members to support and back the Great Jamahiriya.

The meeting issued a statement lauding the civilized stance in which the Great Jamahiriya dealt with the PAN AM and UTA aircraft incidents and asserting solidarity with the Great Jamahiriya in countering the new imperialist plot.

The statement condemned the U.S., Britain and France for escalating the crisis and their harnessing of the United Nations and the Security Council for their colonial goals. It pointed out that the imperialist scheme was aimed at the total political subjugation of the Arab Maghreb which showed unionist aspirations.

The statement deplored the contempt shown by the U.S. towards the supportive stances with Libya as expressed, by governments and people, by the Arab Maghreb Union, the League of Arab States and the Islamic Conference Organisation. The statement urged all Arab forces and non governmental organisations and patriotic writers to expose and condemn the American imperialist plan against another Arab country this time the great Jamahiriya.

Sudanese-Libyan Cooperation in Oil Venture

EA2302143092 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service
Network in Arabic 0315 GMT 19 Feb 92

[Text] Sudan and Chevron overseas company have agreed on an endeavor to find governments, companies or any other establishments that will participate in developing and exploiting oil fields that have been discovered, including total sale, or partnership, or any other partnership formula.

Dr. 'Uthman 'Abd al-Wahhab, minister of energy and mining, explained that the agreement with the Chevron Company was signed after a meeting that was held on 10 February in London. The meeting discussed all means of accelerating the development of Sudanese oil extraction. The minister said that the recent economic decisions had created a suitable climate for foreign investment opportunities. The decisions provided the basis for flexibility in the negotiations.

On the other hand, the minister of industry [title as received] declared that work is now underway to extract oil in Sharif and Abu Jabra areas and that the government has provided all the necessary funds for extracting oil. He said the process of refining Sudanese oil will begin this year. His Excellency explained that his visit to the Libyan Jamahiriya recently was so that he could acquaint himself with the progress made in shipping Libyan oil to Sudan. He said that a ship laden with 50,000 tons of Libyan crude oil is on its way to Sudan and it will be followed by other shipments.

He added that he has familiarized himself with current statistics on Sudanese exports flowing into Libya; statistics which reveal extensive trade relations between the two brotherly countries. He confirmed that preparations have been completed to ship quantities of sugar, sesame and feed grains to the Jamahiriya.

Libyan-Egyptian Petroleum Officials Hold Talks

NC2302130292 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1155 GMT
23 Feb 92

[Excerpt] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—'Abdallah Salim al-Badri, secretary of the Libyan People's Committee for petroleum, arrived in Cairo this afternoon leading an official delegation on a visit to last several days.

Upon arrival, al-Badri said the visit is in response to an invitation from Dr. Hamdi al-Banbi, Egyptian minister of petroleum and mineral resources. He added that he will hold talks with the Egyptian minister on ways to consolidate cooperation in developing petroleum industries. [passage omitted]

Saudi Government Approves Tax Agreement With Libya

LD2502102992 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1423 GMT
24 Feb 92

[Excerpts] Riyadh, 24 Feb (SPA)—The Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, presided over a meeting of the Council of Ministers today at al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh. [passage omitted]

Following the session, Information Minister Al-Sha'ir reported that the council had examined the issues on the agenda and made decisions regarding them:

First, it approved an agreement on mutual tax and tariffs exemption on activities and employment by air transportation firms between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which had been drafted in Riyadh on 15 July 1991. [passage omitted]

Paper Criticizes Lack of Libyan Support for Iraq

JN0203135992 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 2 Mar 92
pp 1, 23

[Editorial: "We Have No One But Ourselves"]

[Text] We fully realize that what the Libyan brothers are experiencing is part of a conspiracy against the entire nation in its endeavors to achieve progress, unity, and to pursue its ever-present dream of controlling the nation's resources and employing them to serve its present interests and those of its future generations.

Moreover, we are well aware that the U.S.-British-French campaign is another form of Western hatred for Arabs, Muslims, Arabism, and Islam. Libya is not the last target of this hatred, nor was it the first. The timing of this campaign against the Libyans, under the canopy of Arab division and collapse, seems to be the appropriate opportunity for launching the campaign. We are not exaggerating when we say that many in this homeland, who harbor bad intentions toward this nation, are impatiently waiting for the racists in Washington, London, and Paris to strike at the Libyan people.

Indeed, these racists do not need to be pressured into carrying out a quick strike, in the same manner as what happened to great Iraq when Arab leaders, media people, parties, "intellectuals," and figures asked Bush to quickly strike at the Iraqi people, and accused him of cowardice when he tarried in the strike as a result of making preparations.

We say all this with fright, because the official Jamahariyah News Agency [JANA] found no other way to defend the correct stance of its homeland and to confront the injustice and slander to which the Libyans are being exposed, except by launching a campaign against Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and all of Iraq. We do not understand the relation between the Iraqis' entry into Kuwait and the conspiracy against the Libyans, whose chapters are being prepared in the capitals of the new world order.

We support Libya, given that it is part of our substantial homeland. We also stand on the side of the fraternal Libyan people, since they are part of our great nation. We cannot but adopt such a stance, even though the fraternal Libyans did not believe that their nation had a right to their resources to help it stand fast, become stronger, and confront the enemies.

The official Jamahariyah News Agency did not dare, or perhaps did not want to say a word either about the killing of thousands of Iraqi children through starvation or about the slaughtering of sick Iraqis by depriving them from medicine. Fraternal Libya did not provide the fraternal Iraqis with food and medicine which the Security Council allows to be sent to Iraq, food and medicine which is being sent by organizations, institutions, companies, and individuals from within the coalition states.

Defending the just Libyan stand against the injustice of the new world order cannot be accomplished by settling bills that harm Arab brotherhood and pan-Arab affiliation. The Libyans have a just cause and are being exposed to a grave injustice. It is wrong to believe that anyone other than their nation—although it is now divided and weak—could stand by them. We should recall that the Russian brothers will not be better than the "Soviet friends" because they are both ready to sell us at any price.

Ramadan Receives New Libyan Charge D'Affaires

JN0503120692 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio
Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 5 Mar 92

[Text] Taha Yasin Ramadan, Revolution Command Council member and vice president, today received Sa'id Ahmad (Abu al-Haqq) [name as received], the new Libyan charge d'affaires, on the occasion of his assumption of his duties.

They discussed means to improve brotherly ties between the two fraternal countries.

Mideast Airlines Lose \$700 Million

92AE0213B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
1 Feb 92 p 10

[Article by Riyadh Miqdadi]

[Text] London—An IATA [International Aviation Transport Association] spokesman revealed that Middle East airline companies (the majority of which are Arab) have shown a loss of more than \$600 million during the months of the Gulf war.

The spokesman told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the Arab airlines' level of traffic and revenues was severely affected by the Gulf crisis. "According to our estimates," he said, "passenger traffic in the Middle East during the Gulf war dropped by 60 percent, which adversely affected activities of those companies. The Middle East airlines alone incurred about one-third of the total losses incurred by world airlines, estimated at \$2 billion, because of the war."

Nevertheless, a spokesman for IATA, whose membership includes 206 international airlines, expects the airlines in the region to again show a strong passenger traffic growth rate during this year. He said: "The primary estimates that we worked out in September last year showed that passenger traffic in the Middle East will grow 12.9 percent in 1992, after dropping 9.4 percent last year. However, IATA is in the process of revising these estimates, as the drop in traffic last year was greater than expected. So there is need to review the 12.9-percent expected increase in light of the continuing world economic recession."

Replying to a question, IATA spokesman said: "Despite the difficulties the civil aviation sector is experiencing

worldwide, it is unlikely that any of the airline companies in the Middle East will cease operating or disappear because of financial losses or mergers and takeovers, as has been happening in other parts of the world. Yet avoiding losses or boosting profit levels assumes strengthening cooperative relations between the airline companies in the area, particularly in the field of joint projects, because high-volume economics enables reaping high financial revenues."

On the other hand, pointing out to the civil aviation crisis in the world, the spokesman said: "1991 was one of the worst years in the history of the international airlines, for in addition to the impact the Gulf war had on travel and tourism, which affected various parts of the world in varying degrees, the world economic recession has exacerbated the crisis, which has led to a sharp drop in the rate of passengers and revenues, and to many companies suffering heavy losses."

Despite the fact that the air transport sector in the world showed some improvement in the last three months of 1991, "this improvement is measured against the same period of 1990, during which travel traffic was affected by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. While an increase in passenger traffic by an average of 4 percent monthly in the last quarter of the last year was recorded, the amount of traffic during this time was considerably less than it was during the same period of 1989." Gunther [Eiser], IATA director general, in discussing his evaluation of the performance of the civil aviation industry, said that the airline companies last year suffered a financial disaster because of the economic recession and the Gulf war, explaining that "traffic in 1991 was very disappointing for the airline companies, and although we have no final details, yet we know that the year was financially disastrous."

"It is too early," he said, "to talk about a real revival in cargo traffic, where the index fluctuates greatly from one month to another."

GCC Official on Arab Economic Plan

92AE0213C London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
5 Feb 92 p 9

[Article by Shafiq al-As'adi]

[Text] Abu Dhabi—Dr. 'Abdallah al-Quwayz, GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] assistant secretary general for economic affairs, announced that three GCC member states have pledged \$6.5 billion to the capital of the Arab Development Program, which the recent Gulf summit approved.

In a statement to AL-HAYAH, he said that Saudi Arabia has pledged \$2.5 billion, Kuwait \$2.5 billion, and the United Arab Emirates [UAE] \$1.5 billion. Kuwait, chairman of the current GCC session, has been charged with carrying out consultations in order to complete the program's capital of \$10 billion over 10 years.

He said that the program board of directors, which includes deputy finance ministers in the member states and chairmen of development funds in them, will hold a meeting in Riyadh next month in order to lay down executive procedural steps for the program and define the necessary terms for offering the program's assistance to the Arab countries.

He said that the amounts that the program will offer to the Arab countries depend on the progress these countries have achieved in liberalizing their economies and their readiness to implement economic and development programs. He said the program does not lay down any political conditions, but the aid will be offered directly to the private sectors in the Arab countries.

In his statement to AL-HAYAH, al-Quwayz said that the GCC countries' participation in the Lebanon Reconstruction Fund is not included in the Arab Development Program. He said that the GCC countries have affirmed, in all the statements issued by the summit meetings, their readiness to contribute to the fund within international efforts. Such efforts fall under the jurisdiction of the Arab Tripartate Committee on Lebanon.

He said that the GCC countries will not make any pledges at the Moscow [peace] conference for multilateral negotiations, adding that the countries' participation is on individual bases and that the secretariat did not take part in this conference.

Dr. al-Quwayz said that work is underway to implement the economic aspect of Damascus Declaration, which consists of two parts: The first is the above-mentioned Arab Development Program, and the second lays down draft protocols for cooperation between the signatories to the declaration. In this regard, he stressed that these protocols have been submitted and that a meeting between representatives of the GCC and Egypt and Syria is to be held in April in order to discuss them.

The Damascus Declaration foreign ministers are scheduled to hold a meeting in Doha in April to discuss all procedural matters relating to the declaration.

Dr. al-Quwayz stressed that Gulf economic unity will be achieved in the year 2000, in light of the Kuwait summit resolutions which laid down a timetable for implementing all regulations and provisions of the GCC economic unity agreement. He said that the 12th Gulf summit dealt with two subjects: The first was the program to finance the Arab Development Program, which has been finally approved. The second was the issue of allowing production units in the GCC member states to open marketing branches in the other countries.

He said that the GCC leaders have charged the member states' finance and trade ministers to implement the remaining part of the economic agreement, stressing that the Secretariat General has submitted to the finance ministers a detailed program on financial matters, and submitted to the trade ministers a special program regarding trade issues.

He said that the first program deals with monetary and fiscal policies, including streamlining currency exchange rates, allowing banks to open branches in the GCC countries, and expanding the acquisition of real estate for investment, in addition to standardizing customs tariffs.

He added that the second program, which concerns trade, provides for expanding stock holdings by GCC citizens, which so far have been restricted to joint companies and new companies.

With regard to the EC countries' intention to impose a tax on their crude oil imports, he said that if such a tax is implemented, it will curb the trend toward trade cooperation between the GCC and the EC. He said that this matter was discussed at the meeting held in Brussels on 21 January between the two sides.

Dr. al-Quwayz asserted that the EC countries have promised to review the technical aspects of this matter which will be discussed again between experts from both sides on 2 March in Brussels.

Regarding exporting Gulf petrochemicals to the EC, he said the two groups are negotiating in order to reach a free trade agreement. If such an agreement is reached, it will incorporate agreed-upon measures regarding the issue of petrochemicals.

Importance of German Ties To Maghreb Discussed

*92AF0492A Casablanca MAROC SOIR in French
19 Feb 92 p 7*

[Article: "Germany Attaches Great Importance to Its Cooperation With the Maghreb Countries"]

[Text] Germany is working to consolidate and strengthen its ties of cooperation with the Maghreb countries, starting with those areas for which the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation has responsibility, according to Mrs. Michaela Geiger, assistant director of the department.

The Ministry of Economic Cooperation attaches great importance to actions required in the domains of the war on poverty, protection of the environment and natural resources, encouragement of private enterprise, and the war against drugs, said Mrs. Geiger in an interview with the periodical INTER NATIONES PRESS published in Bonn.

German officials met last year with representatives of the Moroccan and Tunisian Governments, with which Bonn maintains cooperative ties, to discuss projects in the fields of environmental protection, agricultural and water resource development, and vocational training, she noted.

She also disclosed that contacts with the Algerian Government have been initiated with a view to exploring modalities for consolidating bilateral cooperation,

taking into account the political and economic reforms adopted by the Algerian Government. Cooperation with Mauritania, meanwhile, has been enhanced by increased support for development projects in that country, she added.

Responding to a written question submitted by a German deputy with Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Party, Mrs. Geiger said the emergent new world order has in no way retarded the strengthening of cooperation between Germany and the Maghreb countries.

She also indicated the nations of the European Economic Community [EEC] are working on a new approach to cooperation with the Maghreb countries for the period 1991-96, noting that EEC countries have earmarked sizable appropriations to provide budgetary support for the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA] countries. In addition to financial assistance, the European countries are participating in development projects in the Mediterranean Basin countries, the German official explained.

Mrs. Geiger said cooperative ties between the EEC and UMA should be strengthened further, recalling that the EEC countries issued a statement on 8 April pledging to maintain ties of partnership with the UMA countries that could serve as an example to other regional groups.

INTER NATIONES PRESS also mentioned the meetings held at various levels last year with a view to consolidating cooperative ties between the UMA and Germany. The periodical notes that the German Government, despite the severity of the current global recession, is committed to honoring the assurances given by German officials regarding Bonn's plans for aid to the developing countries.

ALGERIA

FIS Members: Alternative for Youth

*92AF0450B Algiers EL WATAN in French 25 Jan 92
pp 1, 5*

[[Article by Abdelmadjid Bouzidi: "The 1990's of Algerian Youth/Despair and Radicalism"]]

[Text] It is high time to begin a serious study of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] phenomenon in Algerian society. Here is a political party that is managing to become well-established in Algerian society by making us believe that it is a vast religious movement and that that is precisely where the reasons for its success are to be found—but there is nothing less convincing.

At least three reasons lead us to question that religious "plus"—that Islamic "plus"—which the FIS is supposedly bringing to Algerians.

1. Islam has never been in danger in independent Algeria. Quite the contrary: it is a commonplace to point out that the Algerian people are so Muslim that all the political parties currently on the scene are entitled to add the word "Islamic" to their names.

2. One does not see any evidence that today's young people are more Muslim than their parents, who in fact combated colonialism in the name of Islam.

3. Last, one does not see that the FIS central apparatus includes any great theologians specializing in Islam, any great sheikhs who are known worldwide, or even any imams with an established reputation.

So the FIS is above all a political party. As a political party, it has an objective and a strategy for winning power. And since democracy has its rules and they apply to everyone, the criticism that has been made concerning the FLN [National Liberation Front] must also be applied to the FIS.

The fact is that the latter benefits unfairly from the vast national network of mosques that constitutes a formidable vehicle for communication. Moreover, we know nothing about its financing sources, which, whatever they are, seem to be sizable. And last, every day we hear about the great number of its alliances with foreign forces (something that has never been true of the FLN). The FIS attempts to distinguish itself from the other parties by its struggle for a "dawla islamia" [Islamic government], but it is unable to say how that government could be best shaped to fit the current world situation. The only referents for such a system are the Iranian and Sudanese models (and, to a lesser extent, the Pakistani model), and it must be admitted that they are a long way from causing people in the Third World to die of envy.

In that connection, incidentally, it needs to be pointed out that in a recent opinion poll conducted by the CENEAP [expansion not given], only 50 percent of the FIS' voters demanded the establishment of "dawla islamia." This shows that in the FIS there are militants, sympathizers, and voters looking for something other than that illusory paradise on earth. But what are they looking for?

And first of all, who are they?

Over 65 percent of Algeria's young people (between 18 and 29 years of age) are interested in politics and express their feelings through their right to vote. Among those young people expressing themselves politically, 41 percent vote for the FIS, and that is the highest percentage for any party among young people (25 percent vote for the FLN, 13 percent for the RCD [Rally for Culture and Democracy], and 10.5 percent for the FFS [Socialist Forces Front]). The FIS is in favor with single people (38.2 percent, compared to 25 percent for the FLN) and "married people without children" (51 percent, compared to 20.5 percent for the FLN), while 48.6 percent of the unemployed vote for the FIS (compared to 20 percent for the FLN and 13 percent for the FFS), and 44 percent of the workers vote for the FIS (compared to 36.6 percent for the FLN). A breakdown of the electorate by educational level shows that most voters with a primary education (34 percent, the highest percentage in that group) or a secondary education (40 percent, again the highest percentage) vote for the FIS. Since these are

young people between the ages of 18 and 29 years, we are dealing with young people who have been dropped from the educational system. The electorate of the FIS therefore consists of the following:

1. Young people (41 percent, or the highest percentage of all the parties).

2. The unemployed (48.6 percent, again the highest percentage).

3. Those dropped from the educational system (34 percent of those with a primary education and 40 percent of those with a secondary education—the highest percentage in both cases).

What are those young people (at least the 50 percent not looking primarily for "dawla islamia") looking for in the FIS? To answer that question, we must examine the economic and social condition of Algerian young people—that is, the population group between the ages of 16 and 29 years.

It can be said from the start that Algerian young people are marginalized socially, economically, and politically.

In terms of the extent to which their needs—in the fields of education and training, employment, and culture—are being met, Algerian young people are faced with shortcomings, which in some cases are dramatic and well explain what have now become their regular revolts. Those shortcomings also show why the FIS is seen as the last hope for a radical change in the way society currently functions.

Education-Training Less and Less Effective

The widespread implementation of nine years of compulsory education in our country and the fact that 85 percent of the nation's children are in school may lead one to think that this need on the part of young people is correctly taken care of at a young age. However, and disregarding the very serious problem of the quality of the teaching that is dispensed, we have some 217,000 illiterates between the ages of 15 and 19 years (RPGH [General Census of Population and Housing], 1987), 70,000 young people in the same age group who are dropped during the basic cycle every year, 100,000 every year who complete the basic cycle but are unable to move on to the secondary level, and another 100,000 per year who complete the secondary cycle but are unable to move on to the university level.

This means that every year, 270,000 young people leave the educational system and join the 217,000 young illiterates to make up the annual demand by those from 15 to 19 years old for jobs in the labor market. And that population arrives on the labor market with no training and even less qualification.

That problem, which is very serious because of the poor performance of the national educational system, threatens to become even more complex if nothing is done to drastically improve both the internal and the

external results of Algerian schooling. If the results remain the same as they are today, the educational system's basic cycle alone will send out nearly 800,000 16-year-olds over the next 10 years (1990-2000).

The same dramatic problem awaits those leaving the post-basic cycle, between 800,000 and 1.2 million of whom will, during the same period (1990-2000), complete their pre-university studies but be unable to attend the university.

Facing Unemployment Problem

This means that most of the job demand will come to us from those young people between the ages of 16 and 19 years, who will be either untrained or underqualified, at a time when they should be in school.

According to the 1987 RPGH, of the 1.2 million unemployed persons counted, 849,000 were young (from 16 to 29 years old), and 686,034 of those were in the 16-24 age group.

The unemployment rate in that age group (16-24 years) is 48.48 percent (compared to 22.5 percent nationally and 12.8 percent of those between 25 and 64 years of age).

Of the 686,034 unemployed young people between 16 and 24 years of age, 313,000 had filled out a job application. Only 8 percent of them had a secondary education, 10 percent had never attended school, 48.5 percent had not gone beyond the primary level, and 32.5 percent had a middle-level education.

Young people between 16 and 24 years of age definitely constitute an unemployed population that is completely helpless in its struggle for employment: they have no training and even less qualification, as we have already emphasized.

Some studies by the CENEAP tell us that "while education does not guarantee a job, it is nevertheless an asset beginning at the secondary level." Moreover, and in another connection, we learn that young people are attracted to the big cities because residence in a big city increases one's chance of finding a job by a factor of 10. Those same studies have led to another conclusion that is harder to accept: the children of the unemployed are those most helpless in coping with the labor market: the risk of being unemployed is greater if one's father lacks a job. The financial burden and follow-up involved in keeping a youngster in school constitute an unmanageable constraint for unemployed and illiterate parents.

Last, one final conclusion from that study deserves mention: 73 percent of unemployed young people (from 18 to 26 years of age) are the children of workers, laborers, and similar categories. Here we see the extent of the tragedy and the distress: it is the young people in the poorest families who are unable to find jobs. So what is left for them? No comment needed.

In conclusion, we note that 40 percent of unemployed young people from 24 to 26 years of age are married.

Family Unit the Last Refuge

As part of the CENEAP's sociological study of young people, the question of values (reassuring or, on the contrary, distressing) was put to the young people. In descending order of importance, the following values are most reassuring to young people:

1. Family solidarity (notice, as we did, that the state is not mentioned).
2. Work (who said young Algerians liked being on welfare?).
3. Success and money (young people are not fooled; they recognize the "virtues" of the system). The things that most distress young people are unemployment, poverty, loneliness, and, last, "hogra."

The family unit unquestionably constitutes the ultimate protection for young people. Over 80 percent of young people between 16 and 29 years of age live with their families. Only 3.7 percent have their own home. In the case of 59 percent, daily expenses—their "pocket money"—are taken care of by the family.

Other young people mention "resourcefulness" (23 percent), friends (12 percent), or neighbors (6 percent). That pressure by young people on their families obviously leads to conflicts, and 25 percent of the young people interviewed admitted having difficult relations with their parents. The causes mentioned were lack of privacy, unemployment, lack of income, and so on.

Cultural Indigence

As is true of the Algerian population as a whole, Algerian young people suffer tremendously from the "cultural vacuum." Idle and left to themselves, Algerian young people gave the following answers to the question: "Where do you spend most of your leisure time?"

1. At home (35 percent).
2. At the mosque (21 percent).
3. At the cafe (20 percent).

Question 2: "You have cultural needs: how do you satisfy them?"

1. Television (61.9 percent).
2. Newspapers (16.6 percent).
3. Radio (9.4 percent).

Notice that books, the theater, and even movies are absent from that list!

The above data, which incidentally were selected quickly in order not to overburden the analysis, clearly explain the distress of Algerian young people. At the same time, they reveal the damage done by the sectarian ideology that prevailed within the government until the events of October 1988.

A political party emerges, is given legal status, and reveals a strategy for establishing itself that is based on responding to the two strongest demands on the part of Algerian young people: social solidarity and the exercise of power. Algerian young people feel that in the FIS, they have found a genuine channel for expressing social solidarity and justice on the one hand and, on the other, making real progress toward power. Those young people are convinced that only their participation in decision-making will help them solve their many problems. The FIS has well understood that double demand for solidarity and power and is responding to it so well that that it can be considered the young people's political party. The paradox in such a situation is that no true patriot can challenge such demands by the young people. Quite the contrary: true patriots are the only ones who can help them satisfy those demands without the danger of totalitarianism and dictatorship.

Even so, it is necessary that they [text illegible] it perspicacity if it decided that the priority for the period immediately ahead of us was to provide an effective answer to the expectations of Algerian young people and seek fair solutions to their problems.

FIS Activity at Bab-Ezzouar University

92AF0417A *Paris LIBERATION in French*
14 Feb 92 p 14

[Article by Jose Garcon: "The FIS Is Gaining Ground on the Campus"; first paragraph is *LIBERATION* introduction]

[Text] Chased out of the mosques, the Islamists are now trying to lay siege to the universities, where a number of students, angered by police repression, have gone over to their side.

Algiers—Seated on the grass, four young women seem to be sunbathing. The long corridor is practically deserted. A number of telephone booths are out of order, and small groups of students are moving toward the gates of the campus, chatting quietly. The University of Science and Technologies of Bab-Ezzouar, near Algiers, definitely does not look like a tension-filled campus on this weekend in Algeria, although concern is visible on the faces of everyone.

However, the 21,000 students of Bab-Ezzouar University learned on 12 February that their examinations had been postponed—the very day on which they were scheduled to have been given—because of "Islamic agitation." Here, as in Blida and Constantine, the university campuses have gone through several days of turmoil, for which the Islamists in the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] have been blamed.

Decapitated by the arrest of all of its leaders, a number of its elected representatives, and its imams, the Islamist movement has unquestionably tried to fall back on the universities. For more than one week small groups of people—about 1,000 at Bab-Ezzouar University—have

tried to prevent the resumption of classes, after two months of a strike by students. Written on the walls of the university buildings are slogans hostile to the government and favoring the establishment of an "Islamic State." Small demonstrations have been held on the campuses.

Initially exasperated by the "Islamic fundamentalists who want to bring back politics to the universities, no matter what the price," a number of students changed their minds after the clashes, which followed weekly prayers on Friday, 7 February, and led to the proclamation of a state of urgency.

Said, a second-year student of technology, ceaselessly repeats that he "no longer understands." He said: "Since last June the Islamic fundamentalists have been in a minority at Bab-Ezzouar University. Now they are becoming a majority because of the mistakes made by the government. It made a big mess by canceling the legislative elections. Now it no longer knows what to do to resolve this situation...and neither do we.... Last weekend those who are against the riots really provoked us. Nothing was happening, and they began to fire.... How can you keep your mind on your exams when, on leaving your room in the morning, after having heard shooting during a good part of the night, you still bump into the police?" Samia thinks that, "Finally, it is more disturbing than some of the Islamist slogans at the university." Particularly since she, who lives in the Casbah, has not been able to get used to seeing soldiers "jump from one roof to another" during the night.

And the Islamists? "Of course, they are taking advantage of the situation to benefit from all of this!" Nevertheless, the students—and not only the Islamists—went out on a "limited strike" on 10, 11, and 12 February "to say that they no longer agree with what is going on in the country" and to protest against the arrests of several of their classmates "and even certain lecturers." However, it was on 12 February that the students found that "things had really gone too far." At about 0200 a group of about 20 masked men arrived at the campus. According to several eyewitnesses, they neutralized the guards before "completely wrecking" the headquarters of the UEA (the pro-Islamist Union of Algerian Students) and attacking the university mosque, where they seized several kg of documents. One student said: "Certainly, we can no longer put up with all of this violence. However, now the violence no longer comes from just one side, and we are just hostages."

New Ministerial Appointments: Some 'Unexpected'

92AF0450A *Paris LE MONDE in French* 25 Feb 92 p 6

[Article by Georges Marion: "Chief Ministers Stay in Office"; first paragraph is *LE MONDE* introduction]

[Text] On Saturday 22 February, the president of the High State Committee (HCE), Mohamed Boudiaf, approved the cabinet reshuffle recommended by Prime

Minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali. Not counting the latter, who is keeping his combined responsibilities as head of the government and minister of economy, the new team has 27 members—one less than the preceding government. The chief ministers are staying in office.

Algiers—"A very modest step" was the comment on Sunday by Abdelhamid Mehri, secretary general of a National Liberation Front (FLN) that has now firmly entered the opposition. With a touch of impertinence, the FLN's Arabic-language daily newspaper, ECH CHAAB, went even further by stating soberly: "Ghozali is replacing Ghazali at the head of the government."

It is true that the change is not all that obvious. Of the 28 ministers and secretaries of state making up the new government, 17 were part of the previous team.

It will simply be noted that the chief political posts continue to be occupied by the same people as before. In particular, this is the case with the ministers of defense (General Khaled Nezzar), foreign affairs (Lakhdar Brahimi), culture and communications (Aboubakr Belkaid), energy (Nordine Ait-Laoussine), and interior (Larbi Belkheir). They all belong to what could be called Ghazali's "personal guard," having faithfully assisted him when former President Chadli was being removed.

From that standpoint, Belkheir's case deserves special mention. In December, following the results of the first round of legislative elections, the minister of interior, who for a long time had been secretary general of the Office of the President, resolutely joined those who were pushing President Chadli out of office.

Three Appointments Unexpected

That about-face probably explains why the man who symbolized the old regime more than anyone else was kept at his post. His presence may be a political handicap for a prime minister who makes so much of his concern for change, although Ghazali can legitimately argue that as far as he is concerned, his minister of interior, who has the touchy job of maintaining order, has done nothing unworthy.

But the new government, which no longer includes a Ministry of Human Rights (now replaced by a monitoring agency under the authority of the HCE), is not simply a replica of the preceding one. Three of the six new ministers are in fact completely unexpected. They include Hachemi Nait-Djoudi, who until last year was secretary general of the Socialist Forces Front [FFS], and Hocine Ait-Ahmed. Nait-Djoudi had been removed from that post following a clash with Ait-Ahmed. Still a member of the FFS and its national council, he is now taking responsibility for transportation and communications, a step that should bring a strong reaction from Ait-Ahmed, who is very critical of Ghazali.

And the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment is going to Said Guechi, a founding member of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and a former member of

its leadership body. Very critical of the policy pursued by Abassi Madani and Ali Benhadj, Guechi had called for a halt to the general strike started by his party in May (see LE MONDE, 31 May 1991). The excesses of that strike led to Hamrouche's replacement by Ghazali and to the institution of a four-month state of siege.

Guechi later withdrew discreetly from his party, and his appointment as minister reputedly expresses the government's opening up to a more realistic Islamic sensibility than that existing in the current FIS leadership. The same applies to the promotion of Sassi Lamouri, who is the new minister of religious affairs and an influential member of an association that has given a number of its cadres to the FIS. It is doubtful, however, that at a time when fundamentalist militants and leaders are being imprisoned by the thousands, their comrades will see these appointments as anything other than a ploy.

Last, five secretaries of state are entering the government for the first time. Carrying fistfuls of prestigious university diplomas and having never exercised political responsibility, they will contribute their technical know-how in fields related to the priority areas in the upcoming economic recovery program. That is probably the newest feature to be noted in a cabinet reshuffle whose lack of daring is likely to cause a lot of disappointment.

Reaction to Government Reshuffling Reported

Political Parties Respond

92AF0499A Algiers EL WATAN in French
24 Feb 92 pp 1-3

[Article by Abderrezak Merad: "New Government Team: Far From What Was Expected"]

[Text] Politicians, like ordinary citizens, reacted very negatively to the announcement of the new government by Sid Ahmed Ghazali. On 23 February the majority of the political parties held meetings of their respective, principal leaders to decide on what official position to take regarding this new government team.

The reactions that we were able to gather brought out clear disapproval of the selections made by Ghazali, who is considered simply to have made "temporary repairs" instead of breaking the ties to the former system, as desired by the opposition and citizens generally. A limited poll, which we conducted in the streets of Algiers, showed that the people were generally disappointed by the very slight amount of change brought in by Ghazali. In the view of those we interviewed, selected at random from different social and occupational groups, "There is nothing new. Just a few replacements in nonstrategic ministries." Hence a certain skepticism, which does not do much to hide the deep frustration felt by the Algerian people, at a time when hope was beginning to emerge due to the promises made by Mohamed Boudiaf to start again on a completely new foundation.

In the view of the political parties, just about the same feeling of rejection prevailed. The majority of them were expecting a "radical change" from the government. However, they noted that, "Ghozali wanted to do something new with the old." Therefore, in the view of the PRA [Algerian Renewal Party] the new cabinet was "a semichange," which was no basis for rejoicing. Mehri, speaking for the FLN [National Liberation Front], called this reshuffle "a very modest opening," which therefore could not satisfy all expectations. The MAJD [National People's Assembly] displayed caution about a change which, in its view, was nothing of the kind. It said: "The HCE [High State Committee] renewed its confidence in a government operating under a state of siege that has not honored any of its promises."

In the view of the FFS [Front of Socialist Forces]: "The false openings in the system, which in fact are just surface changes, are not likely to deceive a people as clear-sighted as the Algerians."

It was difficult to find a word or phrase showing support for Ghozali's efforts. In fact, there was nothing. The grades given him were rather low regarding a choice that seems to have been made more to reflect a passing formality than to respond to the hopes of the greatest number of people.

For the rest, the appointment of "dissidents" and, above all, the opening up of the government to Islamists [fundamentalist Muslims] were grounds for a broad movement of discontent. In this connection the PAGS [Socialist Vanguard Party] was more sharply opposed to the "presence of fundamentalist Muslims," a favorite target for criticizing the new government unsparingly. This view was only slightly modified. The PAGS considered that, "This is a minor reshuffle that cannot be a real break with the former system." It concentrated its reaction on the nonsense involved in the decision to show confidence in two fundamentalist Muslims.

For its part the ONM [National Veterans' Organization] commented more extensively in the same sense, denouncing the choice of the two members of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], which it considered something of a scandal. A group of Algerians who had fought in Afghanistan, meeting at the Palais des Nations, said that they were "very much disappointed." Disappointment was also expressed by Ben Hamouda, secretary general of the UGTA [General Union of Algerian Workers], who asked himself whether this was a preliminary cabinet reshuffle, which would call for another such change. After 24 February Ben Hamouda plans to ask Ghozali for more detailed answers on this subject. The secretary general of the UGTA strongly regretted that so important an area of activity as the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications should be reduced to the level of a Secretariat of State. Even from a purely "technical" point of view the Ghozali government has not succeeded in making a strong impression on public opinion. That

is, this is quite simply a nonevent that the government will have difficulty in handling, with all of the problems in suspense.

The new component in the Ghozali cabinet, which was to sound the death knell of the old system, was not supported by a consensus. The opposition, a majority of which had welcomed the new cabinet, became disenchanted quickly. Instead of the "super government" promised by Boudiaf, nothing happened, in fact, but a limited change in ministries, whereas the key positions (Ministries of Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs) remained in the hands of those who formerly held these positions and who are identified with a discredited, past era.

The appointment of three persons who until recently were members of opposition parties (FFS and FIS) or other independent figures was not really a sign of change. On the evening of the announcement of the new government opposition party leaders were still talking about the attitude to take toward the new cabinet. The few reactions reported agreed on emphasizing the backward step taken by comparison with the commitments which had been made.

For example, the MAJD considered that "The HCE renewed its confidence in the government of the state of siege that has not kept any of its promises. That is what continuity is. The only novelty, if there is one, is the inclusion of dissidents from the opposition parties. This confirms the refusal of this government to engage in a political dialogue. Therefore, this amounts to a technically inadequate 'papering over' of differences, compared to the efforts made in search of civil peace. Thus, any radical change remains to be carried out."

In the view of the PRA, which had also called for a break with the old order, the government reshuffle is only a semichange that does not respond in any way to the demands of the people.

The appointment of two former founding members of the FIS to cabinet positions amounts to an attempt at a dialogue, in the view of the PRA. It said: "These persons are only dissidents from the FIS. They represent an Islamist orientation but not the FIS. We hope that this will be the beginning of a dialogue." This was not the view of the PAGS, which noted the difference between official statements of the past few weeks and the makeup of the new cabinet.

The FLN, whose secretary general was opposed to the HCE from the time it was installed in office, also held the same view. Abdelhamid Mehri called the cabinet reshuffle a "partial" effort. He considered that "the opening that this signifies is positive, but it is a very modest step, which may seem to some people to be an opening only on the surface." Thus, the FLN expressed its position in relative terms and for a good reason. Its influence on the political scene remains.

In a statement made on TV Channel III the secretary general of the UGTA also expressed reservations, for example, about Ghazali's decision to reduce the status of the minister of posts and telecommunications, a strategic department, to that of a secretary of state. The secretary general of the UGTA, who called the reshuffle a "partial" change, said that he will make a final statement in several days. The position of the FFS, which turned its back on the HCE from the time it was established, can easily be anticipated.

In a statement the National Executive Committee of the FFS considered that: "The government has just finished keeping in office the principal leaders of the administration. In this way it has gone against the hopes of the people, who are calling for an uncompromising break with the system of the single political party, corruption, and injustice. These false openings that, in reality, are only apparent changes, are unlikely to deceive a people as clear-sighted as the Algerians."

Therefore, the hand extended by Boudiaf to all of the actors on the political and social scene risks collecting only the agreement it requested. This is only putting things off for a time.

Citizens' Response 'Skeptical'

92AF0499B Algiers EL WATAN in French
24 Feb 92 p 3

[Text] Caught between promises that have not been carried out and a more and more bitter reality, the youth of Algeria, this important group in the population mentioned in all speeches, has not always been able to find its position in the moving cycle of political life.

The changes that have taken place in the government are not of much concern to this large number of young people, who are interested above all in finding a way out of the present situation. Talking to them about the composition of the new government is a waste of time. The essence of the problem lay elsewhere for one student, who said that he "was not interested at all in political activities and that he prefers to devote himself fully to his studies." In a general way the students are fully involved in their examinations, and they know the price, which they will have to pay in case they fail. In the view of Farida, a young woman following pharmaceutical studies, "The men change every time, but the system remains the same. This is a simple case of replastering holes in the wall. There has been no break with the practices of the past." She added bitterly, "Since October 1988 we have seen three prime ministers and tens of ministers pass by. They promised us mountains of marvels. Finally, it turned out that this was simply change for the sake of change. Whatever the intentions of this minister or that one, this strengthened our skepticism." Aicha, another female student, was less uncompromising. She said: "The most urgent problem to be resolved is the debt, which weighs heavily on our economy. Once this problem is resolved, we can then respond to what the young people are waiting for, in

terms of jobs and housing." According to her, "Given what is presently at stake, the university world should do its best, accept basic changes, and refuse to be satisfied with temporary solutions that lead nowhere."

Said, a 38-year-old businessman, did not beat around the bush in denouncing this cabinet reshuffle. He said: "The participation of two founding members of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] in this government is a betrayal of the principles of their party and of the Islamist [fundamentalist Muslim] rank and file. It is curious to note this turnaround in the situation on their part, when a few months ago they called for a radical change in the existing system. Basically, everyone is trying to enter the government, whatever the price."

His brother thinks just the opposite. According to him, these appointments come at the right time. It was time to bring together all of the political tendencies on the ground, particularly the groups that did best in the recent elections. A government that does not take all of the tendencies into account can only fail. The Hamrouche cabinet is the most striking example of this. With his back leaning against a wall, waiting for a bus that was late in coming, Djamel, 26 years old, seemed to be more realistic. He said: "Whatever the changes, we young people want something specific. We have been deceived for too long. The housing crisis remains an essential problem that the new cabinet leading the country should deal with as quickly as possible."

Rachid, 27 years old, works in the sports sector. He expressed reservations about certain appointments to the cabinet. For example, the inclusion of Melle Mentouri as minister of health. He said: "We have the impression that this position is a family business." And he has some reservations about the continuation in office of Djillali Liabes as minister of universities. He stated: "He was kept in office despite the series of strikes that have harmed the educational opportunities of the students." Regarding the appointment of Leila Aslaoui as minister of youth and sports, he wished her "good luck in demanding an accounting from those who profit from sports."

Rather disillusioned, the father of a family has noted that thinking persons and influential members of the cabinet holding the key positions are still in place and refuse to leave office. So, he asked himself, quite simply, where is the change?

Iran Said Trying To Destabilize Muslim World

92AF0476A Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
22 Feb 92 p 3

[Unattributed article: "The Iranian Regime's Strategy of Destabilization of the Muslim World: Algeria, the Muslims' Preferred Target"]

[Text] The threat that the Tehran regime represents for the Muslim world's stability—recently targeting Algiers and using it as a testing ground—and the need to form a

common Muslim and international front to overthrow this "absolute religious dictatorship," were the reasons for the recent meeting of Mr. Mohamed Sayed El-Mohadissin, member of the Khalq Mujahideen organization in charge of international relations, with members of the Arab press, late Thursday afternoon in a Paris hotel.

According to this official of the Iranian movement of resistance against the mullahs' regime, "Iran's situation in every respect (social, economic, human rights, etc.) has become disastrous since it fell under the fundamentalists' rule, and this has caused them to try and export to other countries the domestic crisis brought about by their fanaticism."

Since Khomeyni's death, he explained, the mullahs' regime has considered which of two lines it should follow: retaining ("hefdh") the "Iranian religious model" within Iranian borders, or expanding it ("bast"); "by a consensus of all factions," he said, it eventually adopted the latter, based on the concept advocated by a high official "that no country but Iran can lead the Islamic world."

Mr. El-Mohadissin quoted several statements of mullah leaders concerning the Iranian regime's dangerous claim to serve as an "engine" and a "guide" to other nations and Muslim states; he also quoted a document from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which, as "number-one principle and objective" of Iran's foreign policy, stressed its "efforts to constitute a worldwide Islamic Republic" (page 37) [not reproduced].

"The world," the document teaches, "is divided into two parts: Dar El Islam and Dar El Kofr. From this point of view, the only border we recognize is the ideological border; the other borders may be condemned and rejected."

According to the Khalq Mujahideen official, "the Gulf crisis was suitable fuel for Iranian fundamentalism," which based its strategy "of expansion" and "destabilization" on four major areas: the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union (especially Azerbaijan), Iraq and the Middle East, the area south of the Gulf, and North Africa with special attention to Algeria."

This strategy, Mr. El-Mohadissin claimed, considers "Iraq and the Middle East as the closest places, the Gulf as a strategic place, and North Africa as the best prepared place." In North Africa, he said, Algeria was used as a test bench for the fundamentalist strategy, which has also turned Sudan into a "base" to infiltrate neighboring countries, "especially since Egypt represents a major link between Maghreb and Machrek."

To undertake and carry out this destabilization of the Muslim world, the official of the Iranian resistance movement indicated, the mullahs' regime can use "two categories of forces": those that transit through its diplomatic services abroad and "prepare the cultural ground" in target countries by making connections with,

and financing the trends that are useful or close to them; and military forces integrated into the pasdaran corps and supervised by the "El-Qods" division, whose objective is to intervene abroad (Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq, etc.).

These military forces, according to El-Mohadissin, comprise volunteers from Iran and other Muslim countries, who are trained at a military academy reserved for that purpose.

A complete organization chart of these forces and a document in English, soon to be translated into Arabic and French, entitled "Islamic Fundamentalism: Dangers, Prospects, and Solutions," which was written by the Iranian resistance movement, were handed to the journalists who were there.

Arab and Muslim countries are becoming aware of the terrible threat that the Iranian mullahs' "absolute religious dictatorship" represents for their safety and their stability, Mr. Mohamed Sayed El-Mohadissin observed; in conclusion, he called for support for the Iranian resistance movement "that is fighting for a democratic and modern Islam," and for the creation of a common front against the fundamentalists. "We may be unable to pick the right friends," he said, "but at least we can pick the right enemies."

Importance of Financial Aid Discussed

92AF0441A Paris LE MONDE in French 22 Feb 92 p 3

[Article by special correspondent in Algiers, Georges Marion: "Algeria: Negotiations With 240 Banks in Paris; The Future of the Regime Depends on the Signature of a Debt Agreement"—first three paragraphs are LE MONDE introduction]

[Text] On Thursday, 20 February, in an interview with Antenne 2, Mr. Mohamed Boudia, chairman of the High State Committee (HCE), stated that he would not condone "any physical or moral attacks" on detainees. "I personally pledge," he added, "not to tolerate any excess in this respect, and if there are any excesses, those responsible will be punished."

For its part, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) reported in LA TRIBUNE DU VENDREDI that 14,000 suspects had been arrested between 6 and 13 February. Already, 69 people have been given sentences ranging from suspended three-month sentences to five years without probation, an official source announced on Wednesday. As for the FLN [National Liberation Front], in a resolution adopted by its Central Committee, it estimated that it is "urgent to return to constitutional life and to the democratic process, which implies that the people should choose."

The "debt reprofiling" agreement was still not signed on Friday. Algeria is trying to get its creditors to agree to defer the repayment of \$1.5 billion, so as to reduce its debt service, estimated at \$9 billion for 1992. For this

year, it can expect only \$11 billion in revenues, mostly from its oil and gas exports.

For Algeria, the agreement with 240 commercial banks that is being negotiated in Paris represents a lot more than the considerable amount of the deferral it is asking for. Actually, the economic recovery plan that Mr. Sid Ahmed Ghazali's government proposes to launch depends to a large extent on the success or failure of this agreement. It will also be of crucial importance in the subsequent negotiations that Algeria, whose cash reserves are depleted, will have to start with its principal creditors soon afterward. Eventually, what is at stake is the future of the new government, which depends on whether or not it can revive a moribund economy.

Pointing to the social and financial failures of the traditional reschedulings implemented by international organizations in several Third World countries, Algeria always refused to reschedule its debt, estimated at some \$23.8 billion at the end of 1991, although it is an unbearable burden. Rescheduling, it said, would place its economy under foreign control, and it would also cut it off from advantageous financing sources.

In concrete terms, Algiers is trying to extend its repayment period without having to comply with the stringent requirements of the Paris and London Clubs. The case took shape nearly two years ago. After various vicissitudes, Credit Lyonnais was asked to direct the operation by gathering the claims of 240 French, U.S., Italian, Arab, and Japanese banks, the latter accounting for the lion's share, with 55 to 60 percent of the debt to be "reprofiled." The banks are now asked to grant Algeria repayment deferrals for \$1.5 million due by the end of March 1993. Loans for terms of more than two years would be repaid over an eight-year period; those for terms of 12 to 24 months would be repaid over five years.

As a result, in 1992, Algeria would be relieved of the necessity to repay \$800 million, and it could inject this amount into its economy, which sorely needs it. But the success of the "reprofiling agreement" is also a prerequisite to obtaining loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the EEC. Financial circles thus estimate that, should the negotiations fail, Algeria stands to be deprived of some \$1.6 billion in new loans, plus a significant share of the \$2.5 billion in loans currently being negotiated with various organizations.

"War Economy"

In other words, a failure would be a disaster, and the rescheduling that Algeria fears so much would then become unavoidable. Unless, as Mr. Belaid Abdesselam, former minister of economy, proposed, Algeria engaged in a "war economy" which would consist in importing only the strict minimum, and even less, until the debt has been paid back. The remedy, in addition to being difficult to implement by a government with a diminished

constituency, would dramatically reduce local consumption, and it might deal a possibly fatal blow to what remains of its economy. Nevertheless, the idea is gaining ground in certain government circles who refuse to place the country under the control of the international financial community.

Fortunately, things have not reached that stage yet. At his last press conference (LE MONDE, 18 February), Mr. Boudiaf assured that negotiations were progressing "in the right direction." The agreement, however, seems difficult to conclude because of the reluctance of U.S. and Italian banks. Already postponed three times since December 1991, its signature should be announced on 14 February. However, in spite of pressures from the French and U.S. governments, who wish to give the decisive impetus in order to solve a problem with considerable political implications, the banks still cannot agree.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ghazali has in his files the announcement of his economic recovery plan, as well as the cabinet reshuffle, already announced and expected any day. Based essentially on the importation of \$8 to \$9 billion worth of capital goods into sectors that would generate jobs and industrial or agricultural activities (LE MONDE, 11 February), the government's new economic and political projects might in fact be radically altered if the Paris meeting failed.

Detention Centers: EC Ties Aid to Human Rights

92AF0441B Paris LE MONDE in French 19 Feb 92 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Algeria: Opening of Five Detention Centers in the Sahara; The Twelve Tie Their Aid to Respect of Human Rights"]

[Text] The government has opened five detention centers in the Sahara desert, to detain the thousands of individuals arrested during combing operations in Islamist circles, we learned on Monday, 17 February (LE MONDE, 18 February). Maitre Rezzag Bara, general secretary of the Algerian Human Rights League (LADH), told the daily AL WATAN that these centers had been set up in the Reggan, Timimoune, Adrar, and Ouargla regions. The individuals placed in these camps might be detained "as long as the state of emergency proclaimed on 9 February lasts, i.e., 12 months," he added.

"We were submerged with calls and requests from citizens worried because they have not heard from their relatives, their friends, their children," Maitre Bara stated. A LADH delegation handed over to the Ministry of Interior a list of complaints about ill-treatment. According to the humanitarian organization, some people were arrested before they had time to get dressed, and older or sick people were given no time to gather their medicines. The minister indicated that commissions were created at the centers to decide who should be further detained.

Meeting in Lisbon on Monday, the ministers of foreign affairs of the twelve issued a communique stating their determination to aid Algeria, although this aid would be tied to the "respect of human rights, tolerance, and political pluralism." They stated that "respect of these principles will represent an important factor in the relations" between the European Community and Algeria.

The Luxembourg minister of foreign affairs stated that "no one had attacked Algeria" during the debate. The Algerians, like the Europeans, are in a "dilemma," he explained, between the cancellation of free elections and the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] program "which is an attack against democracy." According to him, "we must overcome this dilemma by encouraging dialogue and the respect of fundamental liberties."

For his part, the general secretary of the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS), Mr. Hocine Ait Ahmed, estimated, in an interview with a Moroccan television channel on Monday, that "the state of emergency is contrary to human rights." He said that, "it all looks as if they just wanted to turn the page of the democratic process." He believes that saying that social and economic problems must be settled first is "an excuse" that "does not make sense." "We must," he said, "do everything at the same time so as to restore hope."—(AFP)

Risks Posed by State of Emergency Suggested

92AF0401A Paris LE MONDE in French 11 Feb 92 p 1

[Text] Day after day, the "Algerian fracture" is growing deeper and deeper. The declaration of the state of emergency on Sunday 9 February—for the first time since independence—and the dissolution of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] mark a new and perilous stage in the government's merciless monthlong struggle against the fundamentalists.

As the inevitable cycle of agitation and repression unfolds there, the country is drawing irresistibly closer and closer to a state of rampant insurrection. The urban riot scenes remind one of those taking place as part of the Palestinian intifada, and the response by the military rekindles memories in some people of the Algerian War.

Since deposing President Chadli Bendjedid on 11 January, interrupting the election process, and installing a totally devoted High State Committee in power, the Army had been displaying its determination to do battle with its sworn enemy, the FIS. By continuing to defy it through violence, the fundamentalists are giving it an excuse to reduce them to silence, because no self-respecting government can go unpunished if it allows the "bearded ones" to set the country ablaze.

But was it really necessary to go to such extremes? Did the government have an urgent need, in the face of the fundamentalist provocations, to decree a measure, which is ordinarily used by dictatorships and authorizes use of the worst methods: police searches by day and by night,

internment in "security centers," and the possible dissolution of local governments? Under those circumstances, of what value are the promises—very vague ones, incidentally—to "preserve the democratic process" and "give the people back their voice as quickly as possible"?

The gamble being taken by Algerian authorities is a dangerous one. By ordering the virtual suspension of freedoms on the pretext of isolating and neutralizing the FIS, the High State Committee is in danger of gradually alienating a number of Algerians who support the "democratic" parties and who were relieved to see the brakes applied "in extremis" to the fundamentalists. Far from being sidelined, the FIS may very well attract to its side a number of young people who are always ready to rebel, not out of devotion to Islam but very simply because, as a result of unemployment, poverty, and exclusion, they no longer have anything to lose.

Even more serious is the surprising opposition to change on the part of Algeria's leaders, who are taking hardly any initiative apart from repression. Whereas the urgency of the Algerian crisis demands—and this can never be said enough—an economic and social shock treatment, the team in power seems to be completely lacking in imagination. Is it even united? Does Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali's silence reflect dissension at the top level in the state?

One thing is certain: to attack with any hope of success the many problems assailing it, Algeria needs the support of foreign governments and investors. Was this the best way to encourage them? This is another area in which the consequences of the state of emergency threaten to cause disillusionment.

JORDAN

Analysis of Proposed Jordanian Military Reduction

92AE0216A Tel Aviv BAMAHAHE in Hebrew
22 Jan 92 pp 8-9

[Article by Yuval Natan and Or Kashti]

[Text] The Jordanian army cuts down its size. By next year, they will cut 30,000 soldiers. Dr. Z'ev Eytan: "The reduction should not change the perception of defense needs on our eastern front." According to the air force intelligence branch, even in face of the difficulty in carrying out air force acquisition projects, the Jordanian pilot is considered the best of the Arab flyers.

The Gulf War is the direct cause of Jordan's terrible economic condition, which is forcing it to reduce considerably both the size and the quality of its army. The gross national product went down by 50 percent in the six months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August, 1990. The sympathy Jordan showed for Iraq damaged its economic relations with the Gulf states. The financial aid that those countries, especially Saudi Arabia, used to

give Jordan each year has stopped and so has American aid. The cutoff of the flow of cash has especially damaged the military sector, because a large part of the Arab aid was dedicated to funding new weapons projects.

The cutoff in American aid means a "serious problem in the realm of spare parts and upkeep of American equipment," said Lieutenant General Fathi Abu T'aleb, Jordan's second highest intelligence officer. He added that real cutbacks in the army had already been going on for six months. In his words, the army has been reduced from 130,000 men six months ago to 107,000 today.

The goal, as he explained it, is to lower the number of soldiers even further, and, over the next few months, to become a volunteer army of 100,000 men. The economic problems have forced the Jordanian army to cut down dramatically on the amount of training. The number of exercises has gone down by two thirds.

"Any reduction in the size of the Jordanian army does not mean Israel's perception of defense needs on its eastern borders should change," concludes Z'ev Eytan, an expert on Arab armies at the Center for Strategic Research. "Even the Jordanian army, which could not attack Israel alone even before the reductions, constitutes a threat," Eytan explains. "It is always possible—as in 1967—that an Arab coalition will be formed against Israel and the Jordanians will join it—with or without reductions."

In your opinion, are the Jordanian announcements of cutbacks serious?

"These are not just announcements. There is an actual plan for reductions, stemming from lack of financial resources, but things are not being carried out so fast. Look, for example, at our own multiyear program. It took us quite a while to carry out that program. The Jordanians are depending greatly on quiet in the Middle East after the peace process, and it seems that they figure that the likelihood of war on the Israeli border has lessened."

What can you tell us about the Jordanian army?

"The Jordanian army is a people's army, with nine divisions. Overall, it is an army I would give a rating of 'good.' It is a modern western army in everything connected to land warfare. It has only armored and mechanized divisions, very few foot soldiers. The Jordanians support a commando unit, good mobile artillery, and good, quality American- and British-made tanks. The main arms suppliers to Jordan are the United States, Great Britain, and France, with a very small amount of equipment from the late Soviet Union, bought mainly to show the West that they can make it without them."

"The last few years have been difficult for the Jordanian air force. Because of financial difficulties, it has not succeeded in carrying out its plans to strengthen itself, this being in glaring contrast to the other air forces in the region," says the air force intelligence unit. This is the

smallest air force of all the confrontation states. It does not have even one advanced jet. The main power of the Jordanian air force is made up, according to foreign sources, of two interceptor squadrons of Mirage F-1C's, and four squadrons of F-5 jets. There are also several types of helicopters, including attack helicopters like the Cobras.

Jordan canceled two big acquisitions in the last few years. At the beginning of 1989, eight British Tornado jets were cancelled, as was an order for 12 Mirage 2000 jets from France in 1990. With the goal of lightening the defence budget a little, the possibility of selling some of the 65 F-5's was examined. The shortage of parts also lowered the usefulness of the planes and the number of exercises the air force could make.

Before the Gulf War broke out, tight cooperation existed between the Jordanian and Iraqi air forces. During 1989, they even had a joint squadron. "Co-operation with Iraq," the intelligence branch explains, "came not only from political and strategic considerations, but also as a result of the economic distress. The joint squadron enabled Jordanian pilots to accumulate additional flight hours." After the war, the connection with the Iraqi air force was put on a lower profile.

Opposite the small size of the air force and the difficulty of carrying out expansion programs, stand the experience and talents of the Jordanian pilot, considered the best of all the Arab pilots. The Jordanian air force is built on and works according to Western principles. The Jordanian theory of warfare has been nourished by long-standing air cooperation with the American air force.

In spite of the difficult economic situation, the Jordanian air force has not given up the ambition to become equipped with a new advanced war plane. Still, it seems likely that the economic difficulties will force the Jordanians to put off those plans for at least a number of years.

History: Most of the Jordanian High Command Have Never Been in Combat

The last time the Jordanian army went through major changes was after the Yom Kippur War, as a result of lessons learned from that war. The emphasis of that program of reorganization was on building a small but armored force, mobile and with high fire power.

In the framework of that program, the Jordanian armored corps was equipped with sophisticated firing control systems and night vision systems. Twenty-four Cobra planes, quality Tow missiles, and quality Apilas and Law antitank missiles were also purchased. The artillery corps was equipped with computerized firing and advanced range finding and pin-pointing systems and acquired about 100 Copperhead shells.

In the realm of engineering, mine clearing and assault bridge equipment, not known before in the Jordanian army, were purchased from Great Britain. The special

forces were furnished with 12 "Super Puma" helicopters. Similarly, a reconnaissance battalion was set up, to reinforce the intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities of the existing forces.

The weakness of the Jordanian army today lies in the fact that its officers, including the high command, lack battle experience. Most of the Jordanian high command have never been in battle, excluding a little battle with the Syrians in 1970, and the participation of armored battalion no. 40 in the Yom Kippur War. This is true also for the Jordanian pilots.

Until 1976, there was no draft law in Jordan. In 1976, a "Law of Service to the Flag" was instituted, requiring every Jordanian youth to serve two years. After this, he joins the reserves. Of course, the draft has been canceled lately as part of the framework of cutbacks.

The composition of the army population is a sensitive subject in Jordan. The high command and the quality forces are composed mainly of Bedouins and national minorities whose loyalty to the king is not in question. The Palestinians, inhabitants of the east bank, are not given senior positions, unless they are professionals like doctors or engineers. The Palestinians are sent to the regular compulsory track, where there is little chance of advancement. This tendency has been changing over the last few years following the penetration into the army of Muslim and Leftist factors, and this poses a certain threat to King Husayn.

KUWAIT

Defense Minister on Gulf Security, Iranian Ties

PM0303121792 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT
AL-DUWALI in Arabic 26 Feb 92 p 6

[Interview with Kuwaiti Defense Minister 'Ali Sabah al-Salim by Bari'ah 'Alam-al-Din in London; date not given]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted]

['Alam-al-Din] Is it possible to learn some details of Gulf security plans? What is the fate of Omani Sultan Qabus's plan and the Damascus declaration? Are there any obstacles?

[Al-Salim] When we talk about His Majesty Sultan Qabus's plan we emphasize that it is a plan to which we all aspire. But we must know that it cannot be achieved in one, two, or 10 years.

Kuwait informed the brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] that it cannot participate in such a plan because it requires human resources which we need time to make available. Kuwait, as everyone knows, has just come out of a very difficult predicament and needs the efforts of everyone in it to rebuild its Armed Forces and reequip its infrastructure.

In principle, Sultan Qabus's plan is a comprehensive Gulf requirement. But with regard to the details, we must have sufficient time to provide sufficient human resources for it. This is in addition to defining the administrative foundations necessary for it. All these should not be called obstacles. They are details which require consideration and planning to ensure the plan's success.

At their continuous meetings the chiefs of staff at the Gulf defense ministries are busy working to complete the foundations required for implementation and to iron out any obstacles that may emerge on that road. However, we hope to arrive this year at the final formulation of the plan.

And as everyone knows, we have in the Gulf region the "Peninsula Shield," which is forces comprising elements from all GCC states. And discussions today revolve around whether these forces should be regarded as a nucleus for the big Gulf force, or whether it is necessary to form a new Gulf force.

I would like to point here that part of the Peninsula Shield is stationed on Kuwaiti territory and borders, and what is happening now is a reorganization of all situations without any significant obstacles.

['Alam-al-Din] With the first anniversary of liberation the invasion issue must remain the biggest and main concern. So what strategic measures have been taken to prevent a repetition of the invasion? And is what is being done at this level sufficient to prevent someone like Saddam Husayn repeating what he did?

[Al-Salim] I believe that the agreements signed by Kuwait—like the Damascus agreement and the two agreements signed with the United States and Britain—are part of the steps designed to inform Saddam Husayn and any other person in any state that there is a message which he must absorb fully, namely that Kuwait is no easy prey for anyone: It is a state with its own sovereignty, borders, and strength. And that there are international laws and international forces ready to protect these laws. And that any adventure like his invasion would be costly—in terms of the consequences and lessons—for any country that might think of committing an aggression against another state, not just Kuwait.

['Alam-al-Din] What is the practical benefit of the electronic fence which Kuwait intends to set up on its borders with Iraq. And what stage has been reached in the implementation of that plan?

[Al-Salim] Talk about the so-called electronic fence is false. Until today Kuwait has not made a final decision about protecting its borders. All that has happened is that studies of the border issue are being conducted, because the demarcation of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders has not yet been finalized and because of the Iraqi regime's procrastination in embarking on this step. Once the borders are demarcated, several plans will be discussed. And I cannot say today that we will choose a plan

for an electronic fence, one for electrified wires, or another involving building a barrier or digging a dividing trench. All I can say today is that all possibilities are on the cards, since the important thing is to set up a barrier between Kuwait and Iraq, and we will build it after the borders have been demarcated. [passage omitted]

[Alam-al-Din] There is much talk here in London and the Western capitals about the prevailing alarm at Iran's rebuilding of its military forces and purchase of Soviet submarines. So what is the effect of that development on your security and on Gulf security?

[Al-Salim] As I said, Kuwait does not interfere in the internal affairs of other states.

Iran is entitled to purchase the weapons it needs; so are we.

At present we do not regard Iran as a hostile state, especially toward us. It proved its sincere intentions toward us when it refused to support Iraq in its invasion of Kuwait. It condemned and rejected that invasion. And we hope that our neighbor Iran will continue to maintain that position, because Gulf security concerns not only the GCC states but Iran as well. When fire rages in the Gulf it extends to all the states situated on it. Thus we all must cooperate together to protect security and consolidate the foundations of peace.

[Alam-al-Din] What truth is there in the information about Gulf disagreements over the position on Iran?

[Al-Salim] That is untrue. The opposite is true. Because Iran is a friendly state situated on the Gulf, and there is a joint Gulf-Iranian desire to bring closer our views and those of Iran and to broaden the scope of cooperation with it in all fields.

For example, Iran will supply sisterly Qatar with fresh water, and we in Kuwait are studying with the Iranian brothers a similar project under which Iran will supply us with quantities of fresh water.

[Alam al-Din] What stage has been reached in your talks with Iran on defining means of cooperation?

[Al-Salim] Talks are under way with Iran which are designed to broaden the scope of cooperation in several spheres, especially trade.

[Alam-al-Din] There is much talk these days about the dangers inherent in the export of Soviet nuclear capabilities and expertise to Third World states. What is your opinion?

[Al-Salim] When the Soviet Union broke up the United States and the former Soviet Union just agreed to get rid of the nuclear capabilities; but the problem remained of how to deal with the scores of nuclear physicists and scientists who now constitute an explosive substance. And the door was opened to states like Iraq to express their willingness to tempt these scientists to come and work on their nuclear programs. This matter does not

concern Kuwait alone. It is a problem which concerns the world as a whole. Thus I believe that the major states must be quick to take all the strict measures that would prevent these scientists' moving to states such as Iraq. [passage omitted]

MAURITANIA

Foreign Minister Discusses Maghreb Issues

92AF0487A Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI
in Arabic 19 Feb 92 p 4

[Interview with Foreign Minister Hocine Ould Didi by Mahmud Ma'ruf and Mustafa al-'Iraqi; place and date not given]

[Text] [AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] What is the purpose of your Maghreb tour?

[Ould Didi] There are several objectives, but the primary one is rooted in our stewardship as president of the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA] and in the need to exchange ideas and views on procedures for holding the UMA summit in Nouakchott next January. We are also consulting my colleagues in the UMA on adopting uniform positions on Arab and Maghreb causes, especially in view of mounting threats against Libya from certain Western countries. Bilateral relations will also be discussed.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Has the Maghreb position on those threats been conceptualized?

[Ould Didi] The position of the Maghreb, as a union or as [individual] countries, has been enunciated in the Arab League and at the Dakkar Islamic summit. It is a position of solidarity with Libya, which has expressed total willingness and responsiveness to all reasonable and logical demands. We therefore hope that the other party is pragmatic and does not burden Libya and the Arab nation with responsibilities beyond their ability.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] What will your position be if the Security Council resolves to impose an economic embargo on Libya?

[Ould Didi] Indeed, it seems that certain parties are intent on adopting a harsh resolution against Libya before the end of this month, when the U.S. chairs the Security Council. When we, as Arab Maghreb foreign ministers, meet in Nouakchott at the beginning of March, this issue will be on our agenda, should it become necessary to back the UN Secretary General's efforts to preserve Libyan sovereignty.

We had decided to meet at the foreign minister level in the middle of this month in order to antedate the UN Security Council resolution, but some of the brethren had conflicting commitments. At any rate, the Maghreb position is [to side] with Libya against any aggression or violation of its sovereignty, be that a military operation, an embargo, or some other action.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Would you breach such a resolution if it were adopted?

[Ould Didi] Such a resolution would undoubtedly be disturbing to us. We will weigh the situation at Nouakchott and take the necessary action, but I submit in advance that UMA members cannot honor an anti-Libya resolution with whose logic and legitimacy they are not convinced, because we recognize a deliberate escalation here. Libya has informed us and the entire world that it is ready to deliver the accused to any international court and to stand a full investigation, be it within the framework of the International Court of Justice or of the UMA. We, as a union, are willing to do what is necessary to ensure justice. We are hopeful, therefore, that the Security Council will refrain from unjust or illogical resolutions.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] At the Moscow negotiations on the Middle East, did each Maghreb country have a position?

[Ould Didi] Attendance would be an individual action. Since UMA members received individual invitations, we agreed in Marrakech (last December) that the decision to participate would be left to each country, in light of its wishes and views.

Multilateral negotiations have a collective framework called the Administrative Committee for Negotiations, which includes the European Community, the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], and the UMA. However, we have not yet decided to take part [in the conference] and we will make that decision at Nouakchott.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] There were a number of resolutions prior to the Gulf crisis to cooperate with other Arab blocs. The fate of the Arab Cooperation Council is known, of course, but are relations currently maintained with the GCC?

[Ould Didi] There has been no initiative in that direction so far, but it is now possible to resume contacts, since brother Lakhdar Brahimi, Algeria's foreign minister, is currently on a tour of the Gulf, on behalf of Algeria, of course. Brother Habib Ben Yehya, the foreign minister of Tunisia, will also be touring the Gulf in the near future. The results of those tours will be an incentive for us to look into the feasibility of contacts between the two blocs, at least between the secretaries general of the GCC and the UMA.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Have Mauritania's relations with Gulf countries improved at all?

[Ould Didi] There is nothing new in that regard. Our relations with Saudi Arabia are normal but not cordial, and we have no relations with Kuwait. We harbor no sensitivities towards those countries and we have no conflict with them, but they think otherwise.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Did you have meetings with officials of those countries while in Dakkar for the Islamic Conference?

[Ould Didi] Only courtesy calls. The problem with the brethren in the Gulf is that they deny us [the opportunity] to act as an independent, sovereign state with options and positions. We, on the other hand, refuse to account to anybody for our stands. Should a party be injured by us, then that party would be entitled to reprove us and take any stand towards us. But we reject being rebuked for maintaining relations with one party or another, because that is strictly a Mauritanian affair. Have we reproached any Gulf country for its relations with the U.S. or any other country?

They restrain relations with us because of our position on the Gulf crisis. That position is on record and you are aware of it. We were not for the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, but we were against the foreign presence because it was a presence contrary to Arabdom and Islam. Our position prior to the war, during the war, and in the aftermath of the war remains unchanged, and its veracity has been consequently proven. It was the Arabs who paid the price of that war in terms of circumstances, humanity, and destruction.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] What about the 5+5 European-Maghreb summit?

[Ould Didi] The committees, at the technical level, continue to function and meet. We seek a meeting of foreign ministers because a summit is very difficult at this stage, since we will not take part in any meeting without Libya, no matter at what level. The foreign ministers of the two blocs were to meet in Tunis at the beginning of the year, but certain European ministers were reluctant.

I will discuss this subject with my Tunisian counterpart tomorrow, and we, as the president of the UMA, will contact the five European countries once again (Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, and Malta). We will consult with the brethren in Libya and will set a date for our foreign ministers' meeting, in light of all that.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Were the fundamentalists of concern to the Maghreb in the past few months?

[Ould Didi] Not to the extent of being a worry to the UMA as a group. The problem differs from one Maghreb country to another and each country, therefore, reacted to it differently. We, for instance, did not allow them [the fundamentalists], but we did not go after them, because they did nothing that called for such action.

These trends are a fact of life in the Maghreb and in the Arab world because problems, challenges, and disparities in Arab societies help give rise to a brand of extremism (Islamic and otherwise) in the name of justice and equality. A demagogic call, perhaps, but it falls on receptive ears.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Will you be discussing this situation at your meeting in Nouakchott?

[Ould Didi] No, we will not discuss it, because it is an internal matter to be handled by each country in the

manner that it sees fit. We have yet to resolve our bilateral problems, so how can you ask us to solve each other's internal problems?

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Is there no possibility for cooperation in that respect?

[Ould Didi] Each country has its own unique set of circumstances and there is, therefore, no common solution that would apply to all. There are shaykhs and religious movements opposed to fundamentalism in both Morocco and Mauritania, but Algeria lacks such elements to counteract the Islamic Salvation Front.

Islam is a religion of mercy, unity, and harmony among the faithful, and is not an issue for conflict or sedition in the mosques.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Do you foresee a quick resolution to the Western Sahara conflict, in light of statement by Algerian president Mohamed Boudiaf?

[Ould Didi] What I heard about President Boudiaf's statement is different from what I read in the Algerian News Agency reports.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] There will not be a Maghreb initiative on the Western Sahara?

[Ould Didi] What form would such an initiative take? On what grounds? Is there a solution acceptable to both Morocco and the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia el Hamra and Rio de Oro]? Every country interested in the affairs of the region is trying to come up with a suitable solution.

Such a solution is extremely difficult, because each of the parties hold a position that is diametrically opposed to that of the other. Morocco rejects independence for the Sahara and nobody can conceive of Morocco without the Sahara. By the same token, the Polisario rejects a merger with Morocco and insists on an independent state. Our brethren in Algeria insist that they are not a party [to this conflict], but they have been concerned with it for 16 years.

The agreed solution is the UN and its plan, which has been endorsed by all. We in Mauritania have offered all facilities needed for its success. Will the referendum take place? By God, I don't know!

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] What is the status of Mauritanian-Senegalese relations?

[Ould Didi] Negotiations continue and the joint commission will meet in Paris at the beginning of next month for further deliberations on sequestered property, compensation for exiles, and the normalization of relations.

Progress is being made and diligent effort is being made for a quick resolution of those issues.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] It is rumored that the doubts cast on presidential elections in Mauritania were a punishment of sorts for Mauritania's position on certain issues.

[Ould Didi] The elections were free and honest, as all observers would attest, even though there is no denying that there were administrative flaws attributable to our lack of experience and resources.

We believe that all nations should respect the wishes of the Mauritanian people and comply with them.

[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI] Will democracy weaken the FLAM [African Liberation Forces of Mauritania] black opposition movement?

[Ould Didi] Democracy will overcome all friction based on race and origin or birth. We try to keep disagreements political and intellectual in nature and to achieve the unity of the Mauritanian people.

SUDAN

Price Increases Announced, Justified

Bread, Fuel Prices Up

92AF0465A Khartoum SUNA in English 3 Feb 92 p 2

[Article: "Bread, Fuel Prices Increased"]

[Text] Khartoum, Feb 3 (SUNA)—Finance Minister Abdel Rahim Hamdi has announced an increase in bread prices according to which a 60-gram loaf of bread will be sold at L.S.[pounds] 1.25.

The Minister, speaking at a press conference here Monday, also announced hikes in fuel prices, increasing benzine prices to L.S. 50 a gallon and diesel to L.S. 40.

Hamdi indicated that the state will continue to subsidize bread by some one billion pounds, pledging that the government will provide wheat and wheat flour until another alternative is found in this connection.

Hamdi further announced lifting of government's subsidy to aircraft fuel, pointing out that subsidy to botagas is also partially lifted.

The Electricity and Water Corporations will provide their services on commercial basis. Hamdi said noting that the state will subsidize furnace fuel.

He explained that the increase of sugar prices is intended to meet the production cost of the commodity, which, he said, has reached L.S. 9,000 a tonne this year.

The Minister added that 100,000 tonnes of sugar would be exported this year.

Domestic Airfares Up

92AF0465B Khartoum SUNA in English 9 Feb 92 p 3

[Article: "Sudanair Changes Ticket Prices"]

[Text] Khartoum, Feb 9 (SUNA)—Increases in prices of the domestic flights' tickets were announced here Sunday by the Sudan Airways (Sudanair) in implementation of the new economic measures.

According to the new rates, a one-way ticket from Khartoum to each of the following towns will be (in Sudanese pounds):

Atbara 2,200, Dongola 3,200, El Debba 2,500, El Fashir 5,000, El Obeid 2,600, El Geneina 6,600, Juba 8,600, Wau 7,400, Wadi Halfa 4,300, Neyala 5,600, Port Sudan 4,100, Malakal 4,300, Kasala 2,700, Merowe 2,500, El Roseires 3,000 and New Halfa 2,500.

The rates valid as of February 8, the tickets already issued before the aforementioned date will continue to be acceptable until February 14.

Nation Hurt by Subsidies

92AF0465C Khartoum SUNA in English
9 Feb 92 pp 1, 2

[Article: "Commerce Minister Briefs Police Officers on Economic Measures"]

[Text] Khartoum, Feb 9 (SUNA)—Commerce, Cooperation and Supply Minister Dr. Ibrahim 'Ubaydallah has reiterated that the subsidy policy had been destroying the productive sector of the national economy.

While briefing police senior officers at the Police Officers' Club here Sunday on the recently declared economic measures, 'Ubaydallah stated that 48 percent of the general budget was allocated as subsidy while 52 percent of it was for wages and salaries, a situation, as he said, that made the state unable to provide the financial resources that were needed for reform and development.

He explained that the subsidy policy had transferred the Sudanese economy from a productive economy to a consumption one.

He denied allegations that the recent economic measures were linked to the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), adding that the differences between Sudan and the Fund had been existing since 1985.

'Ubaydallah said that the recent increase in salaries was intended to meet the increase in the prices of sugar and wheat-flour, and, subsequently to maintain the current standards of living of citizens.

He also enumerated the achievements which were realized in the sphere of rationalizing consumption.

The briefing was attended by the Police Director Gen. Awad Khogali besides senior officers of Police, Prisons, Fire Brigades and Wildlife Forces.

Al-Bashir Defends Policy

92AF0465D Khartoum SUNA in English
5 Feb 92 pp 9-12

[Article: "Al-Bashir on New Economic Measures"]

[Text] Khartoum, Feb 5 (SUNA)—The Chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC], Gen. 'Umar Al-Bashir, has said the recent economic measures were necessary for rectifying the Sudanese economy.

Al-Bashir, speaking during his regular briefing to national mass media executives Wednesday, said the Revolution's government is aware of the impact of the new policy on poor people and other sectors. He said the government has already taken measures to lessen the impact on the poor segments of the society, saying that other segments will also be considered.

He said the government will monitor closely the situation to know the effects of the new policy on the Sudanese people, particularly the poor and the needy.

The RCC Chairman explained that the measures aimed at liberating the Sudanese economy, ending the state's interference in fixing foreign exchange rates, ending restrictions on imports and eliminations of other ailments.

He reviewed the steps taken by the government to counter the negative effects of the new policy, including the increase of the minimum wage limit by 600 Sudanese pounds to 1,500 pounds and granting new allowances to the employees. The Zakat Chamber will also support some 500,000 poor families, he added.

The RCC Chairman noted that the full liberation of prices does not mean ending the subsidization of the commodities completely, pointing that the state still subsidizes a loaf of bread by 5 pounds and petrol by 50 percent of its importation cost.

In his regular meeting with the mass media executives Gen. Al-Bashir underlined that the success of the new economic measures is totally depending on the positive change of the society's behaviours and trends towards production.

The measures do not neglect the basic role of the citizen in positively and effectively responding to these new policies for the salvation of the country.

On the other hand, Gen. Al-Bashir called for a popular role to be played in the operations for beautifying cities and rehabilitating the state's institutions as the cost of these operations is beyond the state's capabilities.

Gen. Al-Bashir referred to Sudan's participation in the summit meetings of the Preferential Trade Area (P.T.A.) which were held recently in Lusaka and described them as "successful."

The programmes and policies layed out by the P.T.A. member states are the only way-out for the African countries to effectively remedy their economic ailments.

Gen. Al-Bashir pointed out that Sudan had played a prominent role during the P.T.A. conference which demonstrated in the conference's approval to the expansion of wheat and maize cultivation in north Sudan and the development of sugar and building materials industries.

A number of the P.T.A. member states had, further expressed desire to benefit from Sudan's expertise in the field of irrigation engineering, said Gen. Al-Bashir.

Gen. Al-Bashir praised the distinguished performance of the Sudanese diplomacy within the context the preparation for the P.T.A. ministers and experts meetings which preceded the P.T.A. summit meetings.[sentence as published]

Gen. Al-Bashir also hailed the daily "El Sudan El Hadith" for its following up and unmask of the bad flour case, referring in this regard to the press supervisory role to government's performance and implementation of policies.

Minimum Wage Raised

92AF0465E Khartoum SUNA in English
2 Feb 92 pp 10, 11

[Article: "Councils Decree L.S. 1,500 as Minimum Salary"]

[Text] Khartoum, Feb 2 (SUNA)—The joint meeting of the Revolution Command Council (RCC) and the Council of Ministers Sunday decreed raising the minimum salary rate to L.S.[pounds]1,500 monthly for the employees at both public and private sectors. The increase in salaries should start as of Feb 1st.

The Councils created a child allowance reaching L.S. 100 to be paid to the employee for each one of his three children.

Pensioners will be offered more L.S. 500 monthly as of February 1st.[sentence as published]

The Finance Minister, meanwhile, explained that the minimum salary rate of L.S. 1,500 is composed of L.S. 1,000 as basic salary, L.S. 300 as transport allowance and L.S. 200 as livinghood allowance.

TUNISIA

Ben Ali Authorizes Religious Affairs Ministry

LD0403203692 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 4 Mar 92

[President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali address to the nation on the eve of Ramadan—live or recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Men and Women compatriots: Tomorrow we welcome the holy month of Ramadan, the month when the Koran was revealed to be a guide to the people and a mercy to all mankind. May God make it a blessed month for all of us and the entire Muslim nation. [passage omitted: congratulations; explanation of significance of Ramadan; plans for end of fast at end of month]

Since the 7 November change we have endeavored to take care of the affairs of our tolerant faith. We restored the reverence of its rites and institutions and those who have been assigned the task of taking care of them. We have ensured that religion will remain as it is meant to be in its essence and aims—an element of unity and amity bringing all Tunisians together—that it should remain above political considerations, and that it will continue to be a guide and director to good, and will shun evil, sin and transgression. [passage omitted: Religious Affairs Secretariat of State formed soon after 7 November]

Out of our appreciation for what has been realized in the sphere of religion, and in order to consolidate its achievements and widen its positive influence. I find it in order to develop the Religious Affairs Secretariat of State into a Ministry for Religious Affairs, alongside all the other ministries so that it can shoulder its noble task by relying on the qualified expertise which is so abundant in our country today. We hope this ministry will be successful in realizing the further spread of the rays of our tolerant faith among our citizens, and that its cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth Affairs will contribute to our country's revival of its glorious historic role, when it was a lighthouse spreading its rays to all spheres of knowledge. [passage omitted: greetings]

Unionist Democratic Union Leader Meets Ben Ali

LD2602053292 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] The head of state received Abderrahmane Tili, secretary general of the Unionist Democratic Union, within the context of the policy of dialogue with the national opposition parties that the president established. Abderrahmane Tili said the talks covered a range of issues which reiterated Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's commitment to consolidating the democratic course and the role the opposition can play in this respect in moving away from one- upmanship for Tunisia's benefit.

Agency for External Liaison Appoints New Director

LD0803140392 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 7 Mar 92

[Text] The prime minister's office has issued the following statement:

It has been decided to appoint Mr. Slaheddine Maaoui director General of the Tunisian Agency for External Liaison. He replaces Mr. Mohamed al-Yacir, who will be assigned to other duties.

Interior Minister Says Al-Nahdah Remains Active

PM0303164092 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT
AL-DUWALI in Arabic 28 Feb 92 p 9

[Nabil al-Barad'i report: "Tunisian Interior Minister Tells SAWT AL-KUWAYT: 'Al-Nahdah Continues Its Terrorist Actions'"]

[Excerpts] Tunis—Tunisian Interior Minister Abdallah Kallel has announced that the Tunisian authorities have information that the Islamist Al-Nahdah movement is still planning and conspiring in secret, despite the failure of the coup attempts and other terrorist actions which it tried to carry out in the past.

In a statement to SAWT AL-KUWAYT Kallel said that Tunis currently enjoys security and stability thanks to the wisdom with which President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali led the ship of government in critical times and his ability to implement the right decision at the right time.

The Tunisian interior minister said that all the aborted attempts carried out by the Al-Nahdah movement "are evidence of the state of despair and frustration that has taken possession of the terrorist gangs." [passage omitted]

Kallel pointed out that the investigations conducted with the detained leaders and members of the movement have revealed that the movement was also planning to target everything that Tunisian women have achieved.

He emphasized that the ruling Democratic Constitutional Rally [RCD] is still the majority party in Tunisia, adding that the ballot boxes prove this. He expressed his respect for the political orientations of the six recognized opposition parties in Tunisia.

Union Expresses Appreciation for Government Agreements

LD2602050192 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 24 Feb 92

[Text] The General Union of Tunisian Workers' [UGTT] enlarged executive bureau met under the chairmanship of UGTT Secretary General Ismail Sahbani today and in a statement issued tonight expressed its appreciation for the 22 February agreement between the prime minister and the executive bureau's delegation and for the complementary agreement with the education and science minister on the secondary school teachers' demands. It noted that the agreement says that the teachers are invited to resume their educational duties with all dedication and responsibility. The executive bureau emphasized the need to consider the social dimensions of development plans, developing social care and making it comprehensive, protecting citizens'

buying power, and giving priority within the national preoccupations to the issue of combating unemployment.

Government Requires Passports for Travel to Libya

LD2102043192 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 20 Feb 92

[Text] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued the following statement:

Following the discovery of forgeries of national identity cards, and in order to guarantee suitable conditions for the movement of citizens between the Tunisian Republic and the fraternal Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the two countries have decided to use passports at all points of entry as of Tuesday, 25 February, until the new identity cards come into use by the end of 1992. Therefore, all citizens are advised to use their passports, which will allow them to cross the border between the two fraternal countries without a visa.

MDS President Discusses Party Status, Islamists

92AF0486A Tunis REALITES in French
14 Feb 92 pp 4-7

[Interview with Mohamed Moaada, president of the MDS (Movement of Socialist Democrats); place and date not given: "Moaada: Toward a New Party"]

[Text] On the heels of the Tunisian Communist Party and the Progressive Socialist Rally, the Movement of Socialist Democrats is also moving ahead with its proposal to form a new party, which is why we decided to interview MDS President Mohamed Moaada. The purpose for the creation of this new party, to be based on a tripod: social justice, "Arabness," and Islam, is, the MDS president says, to help bring about a redrawing of the Tunisian political map, which he says is artificial because it does not correspond to the country's situation.

[REALITES] A few months ago, you ridiculed certain opposition parties for their lack or absence of representativeness. Poet Aouled Ahmed has also just done so in an interview with the daily ACHARQ AL AWSAT. He is more influential than many parties. What was your reaction to his remarks?

[Moaada] That is typical of how a poet would look at things. I did not say there was no opposition. It does exist. What I did say was that in Tunisia we have dispersion rather than pluralism. Pluralism means one party for every political and intellectual party that exists. Dispersion means the existence of several parties for a single current. That is the situation in Tunisia at the present time, but it is not peculiar to our country. What sense does it make to have 50 parties in Algeria? Does that mean there are 50 different factions? Impossible!

The existence of so many parties leads to a distortion of the democratic process. I have said and still think that

that is how the FLN [National Liberation Front] has helped caused the failure of the democratic process because when a citizen is confronted with 50 ballots, he turns away and chooses the one with which he is already familiar.

In Tunisia today, we have an urgent need—and I shall write an article for REALITES on the subject—for a new political party made up of the democratic faction that believes in social justice and identifies himself as Arab-Islamic. I believe that if Arab nationalist thought modernizes and does away with certain visions from the '50's and '60's, it can join the world democratic trend. Arabness and Islam go hand in hand.

When I spoke of this plan during my recent tour (inside the country), the response was favorable, not only among members of the MDS, but others as well. Tunisians are fed up with the splintering of parties and want a reorganization.

Today even party leaders are convinced of that need, but let us be clear: The Tunisian Communist Party is not a part of this. The party of which I speak will be based on the Arab-Islamic heritage. In my opinion, the faction has a wide following in Tunisia and can bring together all groups sharing the same concepts.

[REALITES] Does that mean that there has been an improvement in relations between the government and the opposition?

[Moada] I think there has been an improvement, at least among leaders and in certain regions.

There are several reasons for the ebb and flow that we have seen in the past between the government and the opposition, related to what I have called the mechanism of democratic change. It is a question that should be thoroughly studied.

Why, when the opposition parties on the one hand brandish certain slogans concerning democracy and work to bring them about, does the government, on the other, proclaim that a democratic orientation is not enough? I think it is because there is a sociological mechanism—meaning the action of the structures, relations within society, and the latter's insertion into the democratic process—that cannot be set off by decisions.

Other factors impede the process. First of all, there is what we call the culture of the single party, on the one hand, and the absolute opposition, on the other. I have asked our party's political committee to study this question.

Let us take the example of Tunisia, where the highest levels of government claim to share the same democratic ideals as the opposition. So then why is there disagreement? For one of the following reasons: Either because they are not sincere, which is not acceptable, or because other factors were not taken into consideration when it came time to carry out these ideals.

Among these factors is the culture of the single party. Any official in the structure of government—the Omda or delegate, for example—or in the party apparatus who has acquired the culture of the single party is not accustomed to accepting pluralism. And there is no need for encouragement from above to act in accordance with this single-party culture. What is more, even if he is told to be democratic, he cannot!

Moreover, the opposition wants to do everything and right away. This is feasible in speeches, but not in practice. That is why I believe that this phase, which is a transition from an old regime based on a single vision to a pluralist regime accepting differences, is one of the most dangerous in the life of societies. It requires flexibility, caution, and awareness on the part of everyone, plus sincerity and trust, naturally.

This phenomenon does not only concern Tunisia. One has to see what has happened to other Third World countries that like Tunisia have opted for democracy over the past two years. Wherever they have all claimed support for democracy all at the same time, the democratic processes have suffered setbacks.

The delicate nature of this phase requires that, in order for it to go smoothly, it be conducted with complete awareness that it is not in the interest of the government, the opposition, Tunisia, or the democratic process itself for relations between the opposition and the government to experience crises. Everyone must work to avoid them.

How many times have incidents occurred in recent days that we have contained so they would cause no problems? When one is faced with an obstacle, one can try to go through it and break a leg or go around it and continue on one's way. We are now all in agreement on avoiding the obstacles of the past in order to gain time.

[REALITES] In the past, the government and opposition disagreed in particular on the speed of change. Is there any agreement on that subject now?

[Moada] Actually, there has been no agreement on the speed of change and yet, there is apparently agreement on the way to manage the speed of change. That speed is impossible to determine because it does not depend on any decision. The important thing is the way the process is handled.

In the past, problems arose because the government made decisions without consulting us. When faced with a fait accompli, we oppose it. A change has now occurred: We are consulted.

[REALITES] Certain opposition parties believe the formation of a Government of National Union is henceforth the only way to move the democratic process forward. What is your opinion?

[Moada] First of all, that question has not been taken up officially. Second, we are a political party and it is not the vocation of a political party to remain in the opposition forever! A political party strives to come to power

in order to apply or help apply its conceptions of society, but this does not mean participating in the exercise of power based on just any formula. A party agrees to participate in government on the basis of its conceptions.

Some of the media, REALITES in particular, have taken up this question. It is also true some are talking about it, but I shall not conceal the fact that we have not reached any definite position on the subject. Nevertheless, let us say it is a widespread idea that we have not rejected, but that we have not urgently asked for. Naturally, if ever it were to be taken up officially, we would take a definitive position.

[REALITES] The MDS has long called for political treatment of the Islamist issue and even the legalization of Ennahdha. Today we are told that a debate is under way in the MDS on the attitude to be taken on the Islamist question. Where has it led?

[Moaada] There is indeed and has always been debate on this subject within the movement. The dialogue began with the appearance of the Islamist phenomenon. It resurfaced in 1989 after certain Islamist elements attacked us even more virulently than the RCD [Rally for Culture and Democracy].

As the situation has evolved and particularly after what happened in Algeria, it is no longer possible for any movement, in my opinion, not to attribute particular importance to this issue, considering the most recent developments on the Maghrebian and Arab scene.

Events in Algeria have posed with much greater acuity issues that already existed. The first question that many intellectuals are asking is: To what extent is it possible to integrate an Islamist political organization into the framework of a democracy? It is not easy to answer this question.

The second question: How much of a distinction can be made between the attitude of Islamist movements toward what is called the Islamist program? Is there only one or are there several Islamist programs?

The third question: What is meant by "Islamic state," the slogan wielded in Algeria? If, by "Islamic state," we mean a nation whose religion is Islam, then Tunisia is an Islamic state and every nation whose constitution makes reference to Islam is also

But if it is interpreted to mean a religious state, then one must also ask what that means. Do we mean a nation as conceived of by the Shi'ites? Remember that the Shi'ites' conception (of the religious state) is different from that of the Sunnis.

The problem becomes even more complicated when the FIS [Islamic Front of Salvation] calls for the institution of the caliphate, which is a well-known political regime.

In my opinion, Islamic movements confuse religion as conveyed by the texts (particularly the Koran) and Muslim history. History is human and the texts sacred.

Let us take the example of the caliphate. The caliphate has not been defined by the Prophet and no text provides for it either.

The Koran and Hadith do not dictate any particular form of government, but give an orientation and speak of Shura, of justice.

In addition to the texts, one cannot forget the acts, particularly what the Islamic Front of Salvation said during the election campaign. Nor can one ignore the remarks of Rabah Kbaier, head of the Political Affairs and Foreign Relations Committee, who said that "elections are a waste of time and money" and that anyone who does not support the Islamist program is a renegade who must be judged. Nor can I close my eyes to his appeal for the fight to spread the Islamist model everywhere. That is why the issue is undergoing a revision on the basis of data and documents.

Whatever the case, Islamist movements are not parties, but a phenomenon for which one must adopt an overall political and cultural approach. Our conviction on this matter has not changed. What we mean by political and cultural approach is not the formation of a party (Islamist). We want and intend for society to be involved.

I have said and repeat that that issue cannot be handled by a purely securitarian [securitaire] approach, but requires a whole range of means.

In addition to these problems, another factor is prompting all parties in Tunisia to attribute great importance to the issue: relations whose existence has now been established between the different Islamist movements, between Sudan and Iran, and so on.

We in the MDS are soon going to devote a meeting to this issue within the framework of the political committee in order to study it more thoroughly.

[REALITE] How has the movement's rank and file reacted to the rapprochement between the MDS and the government? Has it accepted the fact?

[Moaada] As a recognized, democratic, political movement with a certain influence on the national scene, the MDS cannot break with the government. It is natural for our movement to maintain a certain relationship with the government. And I would like to assure you that this relationship has never been broken, even during the most difficult times.

This question was taken up during the National Council meeting and discussed at length for obvious reasons. It is indeed true that there were contacts between the MDS and the government, particularly between the president and myself on numerous occasions. The president also entrusted me with a mission to Colonel al-Qadhafi. That is considered positive by the National Council.

However, there is another aspect affecting the daily lives of members: the degree to which speeches are carried out, which is where people find differences, sometimes very marked ones.

In certain regions, in fact, relations between regional and local authorities and members are good, meaning that the latter can act as a recognized political organization. But in other regions, practices contrary to the democratic process are still common, requiring that an application for a card for free medical care or a scholarship or a job at a certain site be accompanied by the presentation of an RCD card, for example. This naturally affects the attitude of members toward relations with the government.

However, one must add—and this is a mark of major progress—that every time a problem has arisen, we have found a willingness to find a solution. Because the credibility of the democratic process is at stake, relations between the government and the opposition must be normalized on the regional and local levels so the member may freely play his role.

Indeed, the average citizen judges the democratic process in the light of two issues: information, particularly radio and television, and the behavior of local authorities.

[REALITES] What lessons have you learned from the Algerian experience?

[Moaada] First of all, no systematic comparison can be made between the situation in Algeria and Tunisia. I have said before and still say that the RCD is not the FLN. In Tunisia, we have not reached a situation in which a prime minister publicly attacks a former prime minister belonging to the same party as he and the latter responds in kind.

Next, the existence of 50 parties is an aberration. It is also a marginalization or even a falsification of the democratic process. The FLN laid a trap for the others and got caught in it itself. This is the first lesson for regimes and parties in power: Beware of deception in the conduct of the democratic process because it has deadly effects, on society first and the one practicing it as well.

The Algerian experience also poses the problem of the distinction between Islamist movements. I recently saw Shaykh Mahfoudh Nahnah in Libya (Hamas Movement) and told him: "I did not understand your attitude during the elections. Hamas claims to be part of a 'Shuracracy,' meaning a synthesis of the Shura and democracy. I did not understand how you could brandish that slogan and still declare that you are for the Islamist project of the FIS. Such an attitude can have only one of two explanations: Either you are contradicting yourself or you are practicing election opportunism, in which case it is a big mistake." I also told him that "even if I were the only one to do so, I would continue to defend my program."

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Early Budget Figures Show Imminent Deficit

92AE0252A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
3 Mar 92 p 10

[Article by Taj-al-Din 'Abd-al-Haqq: "1.4 Billion Dirham Deficit in UAE Budget"]

[Text] Abu Dhabi—For the first time in nearly seven years, the federal budget of the United Arab Emirates [UAE] is being approved at the beginning of the second quarter of the fiscal year. Formerly, its passage sometimes was delayed until a few days before the end of the fiscal year, or at best, until its last quarter.

At its meeting yesterday morning in Abu Dhabi under the chairmanship of Shaykh Maktum Bin-Rashid, deputy minister of state, head of the Council of Ministers, and ruler of Dubayy; the Council of Ministers approved the budget bill. It contains expenditures of 17.3 billion Emirian dirhams, while its revenues are estimated at 15.9 billion dirhams, for a net deficit of about 1.4 billion dirhams.

According to Ahmad [Bin-]Humayd al-Tayir, the UAE's minister of state for financial and industrial affairs, the increase in this year's budget bill over last year's, which was 16.4 billion dirhams—a difference of about 963 million dirhams—came as the result of an increase in estimated expenditures.

Expenditures for wages and salaries has reached 5.5 billion dirhams, an increase of 265.2 million dirhams over last year. The budget for projects has risen by 338 million dirhams, to more than 1 billion dirhams.

A total of 2.6 billion dirhams have been allocated to the education sector, 1.1 [billion] dirhams to health services, 1.5 billion dirhams to the water and electricity sector, 655.4 million dirhams to social affairs services, and 1.9 billion dirhams to the Interior Ministry.

Among projects, housing problems have been given priority, followed by Education Ministry projects.

Al-Tayir estimated the number of state employees under the new budget at 61,000. They include 30,000 in the Education Ministry, 12,500 in the Health Ministry, about 3,000 in the Awqaf Ministry, and a similar number in the Emirates University.

The Council of Ministers also approved the budgets of organizations that enjoy fiscal and administrative independence. These include the National Union Council, with a budget of 15.6 million dirhams; the Emirates University, with a budget of 543.1 million dirhams; the Colleges of Higher Technology, with a budget of 136.7 million dirhams; the Institute for Management Development, with a budget of 6.8 million dirhams; and the General Information Organization, with a budget of 16.2 million dirhams.

Local economic sources predicted that passage of the budget would have positive effects on the local market. In particular, some new projects would certainly be opened for bidding. In past years, such projects had been included as theoretical items; there had been no time to implement them because of the short period remaining in the fiscal year.

Although in general terms, the deficit in the federal budget is nothing new, new this year is the fact that the deficit may be real if the full budget is spent and all the projects included in it are opened for bidding.

In past years, figures for the deficit were included as numerical estimates of the difference between expenditures and revenues; however, the budget was passed at a late date that did not permit all appropriations to be spent and did not allow implementation of the new projects or new items in the budget. Expenditures were therefore limited to necessary expenditures that had been included in the previous budget, such as wages and salaries. Thus, the deficit in previous years really was theoretical.

This year, however, the probability of an actual deficit is real, due to the early passage of the budget. If this happens, the options available to the government for covering the deficit are: borrowing from the local market in the form of government bonds or issuing a supplementary budget to the amount of the actual deficit.

It is unlikely that the government will turn to imposing taxes or increasing fees to improve the level of state general revenues. Al-Tayir clearly indicated this when he said that the budget included no increase in fees or additional burdens on those who use services provided by the government's various ministries.

Parliamentarians Welcome Saudi Shura Council

92AE0252B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
3 Mar 92 p 4

[Article by 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Siddiqi: "Abu Dhabi Parliamentarians Welcome Announcement of Saudi Shura Council"]

[Text] Abu Dhabi—The announcement of the issuance of a basic law of governance and a decree establishing a consultative council in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received wide response in the United Arab Emirates [UAE].

The Saudi constitutional measures occupied newspaper headlines and were the lead story on radio and television news broadcasts. Newspapers devoted full pages to publishing the texts of the decrees and the address of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques. Leading UAE political, parliamentary, and intellectual figures who spoke to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT saw the steps as a transition to a stage of institutionalizing activity that would frame political practice within clear legal structures.

Most opinions also agreed that "the new formulas for governance have preserved the unique character of the Saudi experience in terms of reliance on the Koran and prophetic tradition [sunna] as the source of legislation and basis of government."

Although most views agreed that the content of the new measures does not differ from what existed previously in the kingdom, as King Fahd clearly stated in his address, most of these views saw the steps from a long-range perspective. They took into consideration the policy of gradualism that has always characterized the Saudi Government, which has always avoided decisions causing upheaval and leading to vacuums, gaps, or confusion at the administrative or legal level.

As an example of this point of view, Hajj Bin-'Abdallah al-Muhayribi, first deputy chairman of the [UAE] National Union Council, said that "The content of the new Saudi constitutional ordinances did not differ from what we had expected since the announcement of intent to issue a basic law of governance and create a consultative council. We knew from the beginning that Saudi Arabia, which God has honored as the site of the two sacred mosques and the fountainhead of Muhammad's message, had to preserve the Islamic character of governance and the role of the Koran and prophetic tradition as the source of legislation in any legal or constitutional ordinance."

Hajj al-Muhayribi said that "Although the kingdom's step was an internal legal step, we expect it to have effects at the regional level. With the creation of a consultative council in Saudi Arabia, all GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states have created legislative institutions. These can be the nucleus for creating a single parliamentary union at the regional level to complement existing measures of political and economic coordination among GCC countries."

He believes that in many experiments in the GCC countries and the UAE, the consultative council formula has established a good level of democratic practice. "We in the countries of the region," he said, "have a unique experience, inasmuch as barriers between ruler and ruled do not exist. The councils of our leaders are open to citizens at any time, which makes the state more like a single extended family."

He went on to explain: "True, the development of modern life requires that we improve this practice and create legal channels for it, but this need not mean making a carbon copy of the experiments of others." He believes that consultation [shura] as a philosophical and intellectual concept was never absent from the countries of the region. However, the existence of institutions devoted to consultation means distributing responsibilities and giving a group of citizens some of the burdens and responsibilities of governance. This should finally be considered a commission, not an honor; a burden, not a show.

Hajj al-Muhayribi stressed that the stability that countries of the region have experienced, despite all the dangers they have faced during the past decade, is proof that the region's political systems draw their legitimacy and strength from real popular support, not ready-made constitutional molds.

'Id Bakhit al-Mazru'i, a member of the National Union Council, said that the basic law came as a faithful expression of the principles that the kingdom had defended throughout its history, and an affirmation of the Islamic identity of its governance, legislation, laws, and authorities.

Al-Mazru'i added that "Within this broad outline that organizes authorities, the various provisions contained in the basic law were of the nature of formal details with no effect on the essence—adherence to the Koran and prophetic tradition as source of legislation and basis of governance."

Al-Mazru'i agreed that the kingdom—with its great political, economic, demographic, and geographic importance—would, by its new legal steps, prepare the way for the establishment of a Gulf parliamentary union capable of advancing the GCC experiment and moving it from the official context into a larger context in which popular participation would occupy a clearer place.

Dr. Hasan 'Alkim, professor at the Emirates University, believes that the Saudi step is a response to regional and international political facts. He believes it constitutes acknowledgment of the importance of popular participation. It will be an important step if it is the basis for other, complementary steps in the future.

WESTERN SAHARA

Italian Union Ready To Help Tindouf 'Prisoners'

92AF0436A Rabat L'OPINION in French 7 Feb 92 p 5

[Text] (MAP)—A delegation consisting of Moroccans who are natives of the Saharan provinces—Bellahi Khalifa, Maa Al-Ainine Marabih Rabou, Bentaleb Lhoucine, and Tamek Mohamed Saleh—has been in Italy on a working visit since Tuesday evening.

In Rome on Wednesday, the delegation held a working meeting with the Italian Union of Lawyers for the Protection of Human Rights.

At the conclusion of that nearly two-hour-long session, the union's president, attorney Mario Lana, expressed satisfaction with the meeting, which provided an opportunity to throw light on aspects that have been unknown to Italian humanitarian organizations until now.

After emphasizing the union's intention to conduct an international campaign on behalf of the prisoners in Tindouf, he announced that an investigating committee would be set up in the near future and that the International Federation for Human Rights would be informed

of the results of that committee's visit to Tindouf to make an on-the-spot inquiry into the deterioration of the prisoners' living conditions.

"I am ready to go wherever necessary—to Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro] and to its financial backers—to see that they conduct themselves in accordance with the universal rules on human rights and allow the reunion of families and the release of imprisoned individuals, who must decide their future for themselves," he said.

Mario Lana also said he was ready to visit the Saharan provinces to inform himself about the reality of the situation and about the preparations under way for holding the referendum under the aegis of the United Nations.

During the working meeting with the Italian Union of Lawyers for the Protection of Human Rights, the delegation's members stressed in particular the consequences of their decision to return to the motherland and deplored the fate of their families being held prisoner in the Tindouf camps, emphasizing that their return is itself an act of self-determination.

They also exposed the practices of the Polisario mercenaries, who want to play the only card left to them—the refugees—in an attempt to get themselves recognized as valid negotiators.

Discussing the referendum planned for the Saharan provinces under the aegis of the United Nations, Bellahi Khalifa drew attention to the obstacles being raised by Polisario to hinder the holding of that referendum, emphasizing that "integration with Morocco constitutes the most viable situation, in which the rights and interests of all Saharans are guaranteed."

Bellahi also drew attention to the split that occurred within Polisario in 1988 and made an appeal to lift the siege of the prisoners in the camps of shame so as to enable them to return to the motherland.

For his part, Tamek presented a historical overview of the colonial presence in Sahara, pointing out that the very same people who founded Polisario had previously waved signs claiming that Sahara was Moroccan.

Moreover, he emphasized the symbiosis in which the citizens of the Saharan provinces live with their brothers in the northern part of the kingdom, drawing attention to what has been achieved since Sahara's return to the motherland and to the active participation by citizens of the southern provinces in political, economic, and other fields.

"We are reaching out our hand to everyone so that our families will be saved from Polisario's jails and its grip," the members of the delegation of Moroccans originally from the Saharan provinces reaffirmed. They also pointed out that those being held include an Italian, an American, and other foreign nationals.

Camp Conditions: Delegation Visits Florence

92AF0449A Rabat L'OPINION in French
10 Feb 92 pp 1, 3

[Article by MAP: "President of Florence Province Says Polisario (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro) Should Accept International Principles on Holding of Referendum"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The delegation of visiting Moroccans from the Saharan provinces that has been in Italy since Tuesday held a working meeting on Friday with Mrs. Mila Pieralli, president of Florence province, who was accompanied by councillors Armando Risaliti and Elio Marini, members of the so-called Association of Solidarity with "Polisario," along with her chief of staff, Mr. Alessandro Belisario.

The delegation, composed of Maalainine Mrabih Rabbou, Lhoucine Ben Taleb, and Mohamed Saleh Tamek, used the occasion to denounce the constant violations of human rights in the camps of Tindouf and to describe the forceful methods of repression used by "Polisario" to keep those sequestered in the camps under an almost permanent state of siege.

Members of the delegation also took turns describing to the Florence province officials the tragic situation in the Tindouf camps, where their families are subject to arbitrary incarceration and continuous torture, knowing full well that Morocco has met and honored all the conditions for holding the referendum in Sahara under UN auspices....

In addition, the delegation drew the attention of the Florence provincial administration to the diversion by "Polisario" leaders of aid intended for the inhabitants of the camps.

In his remarks, councillor Elio Marini noted on the one hand that this aid is purely humanitarian and should be delivered to its intended recipients, and on the other that resolution of the Sahara question must be peaceful, democratic and definitive, by means of the referendum that will end national and international contention over the issue.

In order for this to happen, the delegation also drew the attention of the Florence province officials to the fact that the siege of those sequestered at Tindouf must be lifted, to enable the latter to exercise their most elementary rights, including freedom of movement, so they can reunite with their families.

Tindouf: Situation 'Untenable,' Killings Reported

92AF0461A Rabat L'OPINION in French
11 Feb 92 pp 1, 3

[Text] El Aaiun (MAP)—Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro] is trying desperately to swell its ranks as the date for the

referendum in Sahara approaches, according to many returnees who have recently fled the camps in Lahmada.

The mercenaries have in fact called back all individuals of Saharan origin who now live in Tindouf but were under their control in the Lahmada camps at some point in the past. But the same sources say that very few people have responded to that distress call.

Moreover, the mercenaries are also having trouble keeping the people they are already holding in those camps. The same sources add that that explains the many arrests that have been made in the camps in recent days and have affected mainly young women, while other individuals have been placed under close surveillance. Even the militia, which once guarded the camps and consisted of older soldiers, has been replaced by another militia made up of young men, who are more vulnerable to propaganda.

Now being added to that somber picture is the simmering discontent of about 800 pupils and students who cannot leave the camps because of the lack of transportation for taking them to their schools in Algeria and Libya, according to the same sources.

Untenable Situation

The situation in the camps at Tindouf is untenable, and Saharans who attempt to escape are executed immediately, according to Noureddine Ahmed Bellali, a founding member of Polisario who was a member of the Political Bureau and a representative in Libya (1975-1986) and Syria (1986-1988) before returning to the motherland at the end of 1989.

In a recently published interview with the weekly MAURITANIE DEMAIN, Bellali said that life in Tindouf is precarious because the detainees are exposed to bad weather, hunger, and disease. Those who express ideas differing from Polisario's political line spend the rest of their lives in prison.

Bellali said that the split among the mercenaries has resulted in the development of a tribalism widely practiced by the Polisario leaders...and this has led the Saharans to want to get out of that hell. The UN peace plan offers the detainees that possibility, but the Polisario leadership, fearful that "the Saharans will express by a wide margin the fact that they belong to Morocco—a point on which there is no doubt—has done its best to sabotage the various stages of the referendum in order to cause the failure of that vote, which will be salutary for the inhabitants living under the yoke of a few people thirsting for power," he explained, emphasizing that the voting rules adopted by the United Nations, particularly those concerning tribe and family, make it possible for every Saharan to participate in the referendum.

"The Saharans decided to turn massively to Morocco, thus showing their disapproval of Polisario's attitude, but Polisario has intimidated them by instituting a

curfew, banning assemblies, and limiting movement," he said, adding that "the social situation and the food situation are disastrous because aid from Libya no longer exists and that from Algeria has been sharply reduced." This situation "can only increase the desire of the Saharan inhabitants to rejoin Morocco," he said.

Bellali expressed his conviction "that the Saharans, considering the events of 1988 and the risks they are now running to return to Morocco despite constant surveillance and a state of siege imposed by Polisario, have already expressed the fact that they belong to Morocco." The referendum, he said, will merely provide striking confirmation of that reality, which the Polisario leadership is alone in refusing to believe "because it sounds the death knell of a cause that has no reason to exist."

He emphasized that the step taken by Morocco in calling for a referendum in Sahara "reflects His Majesty King Hassan II's intention to find a legal solution to this conflict by calling the international community to witness."

Noureddine Ahmed Bellali stressed the warm welcome that all Moroccan citizens give to their brothers returning to the motherland, and he called on the Polisario leadership to put an end to its pointless practices and to the suffering of thousands of women and children by allowing the latter to return to the motherland.

Conditions in Camps at Tindouf, Lahmada Exposed

Family Members Held

92AF0438A Rabat L'OPINION in French 13 Feb 92 p 3

[Report on interview with Gajmoula Bent Ebbi, former member of Polisario Political Bureau, by Antonio Parra for LA OPINION of Murcia, Spain; place and date not given: "Polisario Is Prisoner of Maoist Ideology"]

[Text] "If the majority of Saharans are not fleeing the camps in Tindouf, the reason is that they are being held against their will and have no possibility of escaping," said Mrs. Gajmoula Bent Ebbi, former president of the Union of Saharan Women, in an interview granted recently to the Murcia daily newspaper LA OPINION.

In that interview, which was recorded by reporter Antonio Parra and illustrated with a photograph of Gajmoula, the former member of the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro] Political Bureau points out that part of her family is still being held in Tindouf, where it is suffering reprisals.

"The same is true of other Saharan families whose members have returned to their fatherland, Morocco," she says.

Gajmoula points out that the "Saharans in Tindouf are tired of this struggle with no future and are fleeing the camps by way of Mauritania...to escape the underground

prisons and the torture to which they are subjected because they dare to oppose the official line."

The Polisario movement has remained a prisoner of Maoist ideology and of beliefs rooted in the past...and its only hope is to rejoin Morocco—a powerful country—so that together they can build the future," Gajmoula said, noting that never has even one Saharan woman been part of Polisario's army. "The only privileged Saharan woman is the wife of Mohamed Abdelaziz, the current 'president' of the so-called SDAR [Saharan Democratic Arab Republic]. Khadija has never agreed to live in the camps. She lives in a fine big house in Tindouf. That is natural, since she is an Algerian and lives with her family. She visits the camps only when she has to deal with visits by delegations of foreign women visiting the camps," Gajmoula pointed out in conclusion.

Low Morale, Malnutrition Reported

92AF0438B Rabat L'OPINION in French 7 Feb 92 p 5

[Text] Two citizens who are natives of the Saharan provinces—Ibrahim Salah Mohamed Salah and his wife, Toutou Mohamed Salah—recently returned to the motherland in response to the royal appeal: "The fatherland is lenient and merciful."

Appearing on Moroccan Television's Channel 1 on Tuesday evening, Ibrahim Salah Mohamed Salah, who joined Polisario's [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro] ranks in December 1978, described the tragic situation prevailing in the camps at Tindouf as a result of the mistreatment and malnutrition, which are causing those confined against their will to no longer think of anything but escaping the camps of shame and returning to their motherland.

A native of Dakhla, Ibrahim Salah Mohamed Salah, 28, who worked as a nurse and an interpreter for Cuban physicians, said that people belonging to the ranks of the mercenaries were starting to catch on to the intrigues and plots hatched by the tiny group of leaders and were no longer playthings in the hands of the latter. He also emphasized the very low morale prevailing in the ranks of the mercenaries.

He added that he had taken advantage of the presence of his wife, 20-year-old Toutou Mohamed Salah, in the Mauritanian town of Lagouira to join her there, after which they returned to the motherland together.

Conditions Termed 'Inhumane'

92AF0438C Rabat L'OPINION in French
6 Feb 92 pp 1, 9

[Text] Four citizens who are natives of the Saharan provinces recently returned to Morocco in response to the royal appeal: "The fatherland is lenient and merciful."

They are Hammoudi Ibrahim Mohamed Salem Zoubeir, Maa El-Ainine Mamina, Abdessalam Sidi Othmane, and Maa El-Ainine Jedna, who occupied the following positions, respectively, in the ranks of Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro]: logistics officer, teacher, primary teacher, and logistics representative.

In their statements on national television, they mentioned in particular the conditions under which they had enlisted in Polisario's ranks under the influence of the lying propaganda of the mercenaries, the situation in the camps at Lahmada, "the inhumane practices" engaged in by the ruling clique, and the popular discontent prevailing in the camps.

They also said they had been subjected to investigation and interrogation in the camps at Tindouf and denounced the hideous exploitation of individuals being held against their will by the mercenaries for the latter's benefit.

They pointed out that the revolt in 1988 had contributed greatly to a new awareness among those being held against their will and that the latter were determined to smash the blockade affecting them and had lost all confidence in the propaganda and "broken phonograph record of demagoguery," which the mercenaries keep trotting out solely on the basis of the ambitions of certain individuals who are trying to achieve personal objectives on the backs of an innocent population.

If the blockade, which is keeping people in the camps at Lahmada against their will, were raised, they would all return to the motherland, the men emphasized.

Last, they reported dissension within Polisario's forces and mentioned the diversionary tactics being used by the mercenaries, whose lying arguments are an attempt to make Morocco responsible for the hindrances to the referendum process being carried out under the aegis of the United Nations.

Opposition Daily on Western Sahara Referendum

LD2902200392 Rabat MAP in English 1302 GMT
29 Feb 92

[Text] Rabat, Feb.29 (MAP)—It is up to the UN secretary general to voluntarily and decisively revive the process of organizing the referendum by discarding the fallacious pretexts devised by those who no longer have any illusions as to the outcome of the referendum they are to face, the Moroccan daily AL-BAYANE said Friday.

The daily was commenting the statement of the Swiss president made following his talks with the UN secretary general announcing withdrawal of the Swiss (medical) contingent from the UN mission for the referendum in Western Sahara.

AL-BAYANE noted that "this announcement was made while Butros Ghali is to shortly present a report to the

Security Council on the Sahara issue and the means to reactivate the referendum process."

Viewed by Morocco, the Swiss stance seems to be inappropriate considering the current conjuncture and short term prospects, the opposition daily affirmed, adding that Morocco is keen on the holding of the referendum as soon as possible because "we need the endorsement of the international community".

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Foreign Minister on Reconciliation With Neighbors

92AE0248A London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
21 Feb 92 pp 32-33

[Interview with 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemen's minister of foreign affairs, by Sami al-Hajj in London, date not given: "Yemen's Minister of Foreign Affairs Tells AL-HAWADITH: 'Normalizing Relations With Gulf States Depends on Their Willingness To Overlook Past'"]

[Text] Dr 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemen's minister of foreign affairs, had to cut short his visit to London and change the itinerary of his European tour. He had to go to Paris where he met with Roland Dumas, France's minister of foreign affairs. Dr al-Iryani was in the British capital when he was informed that the French had requested a change in his itinerary so that the two ministers would have an opportunity to look into the affairs of the Horn of Africa, where the two countries have concerns and interests which require them to work together to find solutions to that area's problems. From Paris, al-Iryani traveled to the Netherlands, where he held talks with that country's prime minister and minister of foreign affairs on developing relations between the two countries. Relations between the Netherlands and Yemen were not impacted by the effects of the Gulf war.

AL-HAWADITH met with Yemen's minister of foreign affairs in London and conducted a brief interview with him on the goals of his visit to Britain. AL-HAWADITH asked the minister about Yemen's relations with the United Kingdom and with the United States of America. The minister characterized those relations as normal, and said that they had moved beyond the effects of the Gulf crisis. The interview with Dr al-Iryani basically touched upon Yemen's relations with its neighbors in the Gulf, especially the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Al-Iryani told AL-HAWADITH that relations between Sanaa and Muscat were excellent, but he said that relations between Sanaa and Riyadh were "frozen." He affirmed that Yemen wants "a thaw" in those relations and that it had made its wishes public.

[al-Hajj] Relations between Yemen and Britain were affected by the Gulf war, and it is known that repairing

those relations was one of the goals of your visit to London. Was that goal achieved?

[al-Iryani] Actually, the Gulf war's effect on relations between Yemen and Britain was really relative, but these relations are now normal. Actually, I met Douglas Hurd, Britain's foreign minister, in May 1991, two months after the war ended. We met in Cairo and exchanged views, and since then we agreed that each one of us would listen with an open mind to what the other had to say. That does not necessarily mean reaching an understanding. After all, mending fences is really not the purpose of this visit. Relations between our two countries were really affected during the crisis. Now, however, these relations are back to normal. This visit is a return visit for two visits to Yemen made by Britain's minister of foreign affairs and by Mr. Douglas Hugh, Britain's minister of state for foreign affairs. Another purpose of this visit is to continue talk about the regional issues which were being discussed during the Gulf crisis, and again two months after the crisis ended. Our discussion of these issues continued when we met in New York last October and agreed on this visit.

[al-Hajj] Since you discussed regional issues with the British minister, did you ask him, for example, to do something about improving your relations with the United States? Yemen's relations with the United States were affected by the Gulf crisis.

[al-Iryani] Actually, relations between Yemen and the United States are not so tense, nor is the degree of misunderstanding between the two parties such that mediation by another party is required. Relations between Yemen and the United States are normal and characterized by understanding, but I won't necessarily say agreement. That is why the subject of Yemeni-U.S. relations was not discussed, because these relations are neither that tense nor that bad to require a third party.

[al-Hajj] Do we conclude, then, that your relations with Britain and with the United States are normal? How would you characterize relations between Yemen and the Gulf states in general?

[al-Iryani] When you talk about the Gulf states, you are, of course, referring to the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. First of all, relations between Yemen and Oman are excellent.

[al-Hajj] Despite what has been said about an agreement regarding drawing the borders?

[al-Iryani] Let me tell you that what was said about the agreement on the borders was said only in Yemen, and it was said in the context of the Yemeni Government's commitment to freedom, democracy, and the right of every Yemeni citizen to express all opinions freely. This matter does not, and will not, disturb relations between Yemen and Oman. But I cannot say that our relations with the remaining five members of the GCC countries are on a par with our relations with the Government of Oman. Nor can I say that these relations have been

broken or are deteriorating. What can be said is that these relations are frozen, but they are neither deteriorating, nor have they been broken.

[al-Hajj] Since these relations are frozen, have no attempts to "thaw" them been made, either by those who are directly involved or by another party?

[al-Iryani] I believe that, as far as we are concerned in the Yemeni Republic, all officials on different levels have declared publicly that the Yemeni Republic sets no conditions or restrictions on having normal relations with its neighbors. Yemeni officials need no third party to make and convey that declaration. When such a statement is made publicly, I believe that mediators are not needed.

[al-Hajj] Let us be somewhat specific. Your relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are the most important of your relations with the GCC countries. Yemen and Saudi Arabia are not only neighbors, but they are also fraternal countries. Is there anything you would like to do to restore normalcy to these relations?

[al-Iryani] Once again, relations between Yemen and Saudi Arabia are of interest to us. We do not want these relations to be governed by futile debates about another party's positions and another party's right. Nor do we want to argue about winners and losers, the willing and the unwilling, or the unfortunate and the suffering. Such arguments should not govern our relations with Saudi Arabia, which I say had deteriorated, but are now frozen. Thank God, these relations are not tense. In my judgment, therefore, restoring them to normalcy depends on both countries wanting everyone to move beyond the failures of the past and look to the present and the future. This is not to say that the experience of the past may not be touched upon and used to teach us a lesson, so we would not repeat that experience in the future. I do not mean to say that we should close this chapter, and forget about the past and say the matter is over and the case is closed. Instead, we should find fault with each other and speak frankly with each other. We should view what we agree about as a mistake and what we disagree about as a common denominator.

[al-Hajj] There are problems on Yemen's doorstep in the Horn of Africa, in Somalia, in Eritrea, and in Djibouti. What are the effects of these problems on Yemen?

[al-Iryani] The situation in Yemen is tied to security and stability in the Horn of Africa and to harmonious relations between the countries of the Horn of Africa. That is why the Yemeni Republic strives to have good, commendable, and benign relations with the countries that are fighting with each other in the region. The Yemeni Government has always been striving with Somalia, Eritrea, and the new regime in Ethiopia for security and stability in the region.

[al-Hajj] When you left Yemen, the news that was coming out of there was contradictory. There are discussions and arguments about the period of transition, and

there are people calling for the government to be changed and replaced by a coalition government that would oversee the elections to be held next November. What is the truth about the domestic situation in Yemen?

[al-Iryani] All this, first of all, is a sign of health and vitality. Accordingly, any political party or group has the right to ask for what it wants, provided that it gets what it wants by democratic methods. This is what all political forces in Yemen are doing. Some newspapers prefer dealing only with that which would give Arab readers the impression that doom and gloom await Yemen. That is their business, and we do not blame them, because these newspapers actually rely on public sources in Yemen that are political and partisan. But let me say that, despite some selectivity here, these newspapers say nothing but the truth. They rely on Yemeni sources, and they, too, speak freely and democratically.

[al-Hajj] The second part of the question has to do with change in the government. What is the answer to that part of the question?

[al-Iryani] The subject of changing the government is open for discussion and debate. It is not a closed matter. Government has its opinion on that subject, and the opposition has its own opinion. It is the government's opinion that the Elections Law, which is under discussion and will be presented to the people's representatives and discussed by all political forces on the scene in Yemen, provides for the formation of a supreme elections committee that is totally independent of the political power and the opposition. This committee would supervise the elections and see to it that they are conducted in a manner which will provide everyone with equal opportunities. This is the government's position. That position is better than any coalition government whose members could join forces and conspire against the elections. And yet, the opposition has the right to call for a coalition government.

AFGHANISTAN

Economic Protocol Signed With China

92AS0715A Kabul THE KABUL TIMES in English
11 Jan 92 p 2

[Excerpts of interview with Juma Gul Nikyar by Shinwari; place and date not given: "Sino-Afghan Cooperation Protocol Signed"]

[Text] A protocol on technical and economic cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Mines and Industries of the Republic of Afghanistan and the national construction company of the People's Republic of China on December 21.

Our reporter had an interview with Juma Gul Nikyar, President of the Planning department of that ministry, the excerpts of which are presented below:

Q: Please explain the significance of the signing of this protocol which indicates the commencement of technical and economic cooperation after a long period between the two neighbouring countries?

A: It is evident that the signing of this protocol is a fruitful measure which was adopted to the benefit of the peoples of the two countries. In the present conditions of our country when the factories direly need assistance it is of exclusive importance in strengthening the infrastructure of the industries of Afghanistan. This protocol also covers the rehabilitation and montage of a number of defunct factories.

The technical and economic studies of the new projects and their setting up and mean while the rehabilitation of some defunct projects will certainly play a significant role in raising the national economy of the country.

Q: On the basis of this protocol, what sort of economical and technical studies are conducted on the eleven industrial projects?

A: As a result of this protocol technical and economical studies will be conducted on Soda, glass and plastic bag manufacturing new factories, projects on fertilizer and petroleum and gas industries, reconstruction of Jabul Saraj, Ghorri and Herat cement factories and the technical studies of Ainak copper factory. After the completion of the technical and economic studies, another protocol will be signed on the setting up the above projects.

Q: In the light of the present tendencies what will be the situation of the technical and economic cooperation pertaining to the mines and industries development of our country with the People's Republic of China and other countries?

A: It is evident that as a result of the 13 year senseless war the development activities have been decreased and as well as a large number of the factories have been made defunct due to the lack of the spare parts and cessation of

the technical and financial assistance of the friendly countries. For that reason in the present conditions, our country is of dire need of the technical and economic cooperation of all countries and the commencement of the cooperation of the People's Republic of China in the sphere of mines and industries is a testimony to the fact.

On the basis of its envisaged objectives, the Ministry of Mines and Industries will spare no effort to attract the assistance of developed countries to the establishment of those projects which are of exclusive importance in raising the national economy of our country.

Officials, Business Leaders Discuss Economic Issues

92AS0716B Kabul THE KABUL TIMES in English
9 Jan 92 pp 1, 2

[Article: "Capital Holders Urged To Be Keen on War and Peace Question"]

[Text] Prime Minister Fazl Haq Khaleqyar had a call on owners of industries and the private investor in its headquarters yesterday, reported BIA with reference to a concerned source of the CM [chief minister]. Present were also Farid Zarif, head of the Secretariat of the Economic Consultative Council and Mohammad Ismael Qasemyar, President of the Council of Ministers Central Department for Encouragement and Development of Private Investments. Debated were the government's policy as regards the market economy, removal of the impediments and problems of industry and trade in private sector, amendment of some legislative documents to the benefit of national entrepreneurs, growth and encouragement of domestic and foreign investments and search of proper ways for meeting the demands of the owners of industries and members of the above association.

After the meeting began with recitation of some verses from the Holy Koran, Abdullah Faizi, President of the said association presented a report on its activities, in which he specifically thanked the government for its protection of and support to the private industrialists and entrepreneur.

He was followed by Haji Ebadullah Baoak, Deputy President of the Economic Consultative Council, assuring of the preparedness of the private investors to serve the people and expressing gratitude to the head of the government for his endeavours aimed at helping the growth of trade and notably reactivizing the private sector in national economy.

Thereafter, 20 owners of factories and industries and traders took the floor, expressing with perfect freedom their views, proposals and demands which mainly centred on the problem of taxation, shortage of oil, power, telephone facilities, better process of pelt and intestine, revision of the customs tariffs, non-fulfilment of the

commitments by the Afghan National Insurance Company, supply of raw material needed by industrial ventures.

In his speech, summing up the views and offers set forth, Prime Minister Fazl Haq Khaleqyar appreciated the role and contribution of the capital holders, owners of industries and national entrepreneurs in better serving the nation and helping the national economy's growth particularly in these years of war hardships and pressure. He added that they need to be keen, added to these activities, on the question of war and peace in the country and to help the government lifting its shortcomings with the helpful views, constructive offers and consultations.

Giving the account of hardships and plight of the war, quarrel and discord under the sensitive conditions of transition from war to peace, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that the people if united and cohesive, can overcome triumphantly this hard juncture. It is the duty of all Afghans, irrespective of their place and position, to take advantage of these favourable opportunities and to wholeheartedly strive for the national unity, salvation of the homeland from the war nightmare and establishment of peace.

Head of the government underlined the facilities the government has provided for protection of private investment, promotion of export and other activities of the private investors and stressed the policy of the government centred on the market economy.

"You know that the government has already lifted its monopoly of dealing the strategic items such as sugar, oil, wheat etc, and permitted the national entrepreneurs to actively work in this area in the same line efforts are being made in order to have the existing problems lifted from the path of growth of the trade, industry and other private undertakings. The transfer of some of the government-run trade establishments to the private sector is also a point and amendments are under way one after another for completion of and improvement of the legislations in line with the national interests and for protection of the investors and industrialists. Of course, in this process the government pays keen attention to your consultations, proposals and points of criticism," Prime Minister Fazl Haq Khaleqyar went on to say.

Citing some immediate amendments to some legislations as examples, the Prime Minister assured that the government would endeavour so that more grounds shall be paved comfortable for the further development of the private investments, trade and industry. Through the amendment and completion of the legislations with active consultation of the national entrepreneurs and capital holders.

Stressing further closeness of the national entrepreneurs and the government vitally helpful for the growth of national economy and removal of the existing shortcomings and problems.

He called on the members of the above association to refer their views and proposals individually and collectively to the government for achieving the goals listed.

Head of the government analysed one by one all the proposals and demands set forth in the meeting and issued instructions for meeting the possible requirements.

At the end, before the meeting ended with prayers for peace, Haji Ebadullah Faizi expressed thanks to Prime Minister for his participation in such a meeting and for his attention to the views of the national capital holders.

Measures To Counter Narcotics Threat Viewed

92AS0176A Kabul THE KABUL TIMES in English
1 Jan 92 p 2

[Article by Jawid: "Towards Elimination of Narcotics Threat"]

[Text] Man has recognized, since ancient times, hashish bush and its gum-like sap, once used as a drug to relieve pain and once for bringing a short change in the "monotonous" colour of life. In some religions, this drug has been used in prayers and religious ceremonies. Given the impact of hashish in making one submissive, it is in wide use even nowadays in offensive and forced battles.

Notwithstanding its millenniums-old recognition and with almost 200 million addicts, hashish has failed to be liked by the human community. Consumption of hashish either through smoking or drinking "Bhang" juice mostly takes place in groups and its imaginary impacts are further added to by its collective way of use. Otherwise its individual use might be for relieving one's inner pains and tortures and shows one's inner disorders.

The affects of the hashish on one's behaviour, psychological activities and health condition differ in terms of the quantity of the substance used, condition of use, social surroundings when consuming and finally the condition of the smoker. Its affects are different moreover from the points of view of quality and quantity, form and intensity; it mostly gives a false competence, calmness, pleasure and joy which are short-lived.

Drunk by hashish, one may see invisible objects and may hear sounds which have not been sounded in fact; and some of hashish smokers claim to have walked over the clouds.

In view of the harms of the narcotics in general and those of hashish in particular for man, the State of the Republic of Afghanistan has embarked on serious programmes and campaign to rid the people of this calamitous evil, which is more common in our country unfortunately. It has done its utmost to block the spread of this social disease and to eradicate it totally.

Among the measures adopted, on one is the establishment of the High State Commission to Combat the Production, Trafficking and Consumption of Narcotics,

which came into being under a Presidential decree with Vice President General of Army Mohammad Rafi as its chairman. Members of the Commission include senior officials such as Chief Justice Attorney General, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of Interior, Justice, Agriculture and Land Reforms, Education, public health, Information and Culture, Islamic Affairs and Religious Trusts, Work and Social Affairs, Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, State Security—an authoritative composition which attests to the importance the leadership of the country attach to this drive.

Conscious of the fact that drug-abuse runs counter to the accepted provisions of the sacred religion of Islam, the legislations enforced in the country and all the human norms, the State of the Republic of Afghanistan is actively struggling against the drug-abuse, while abiding by its commitments under the international convention on opium of January 13, 1912, the international convention of limitation of the supply and production of narcotics of June 21, 1935 and convention on narcotics of March 19, 1963. With all the possibilities, it is endeavouring to actively cooperate with all the countries of the world and the United Nations.

According to a spokesman for the above commission, only this year 7750 kg hashish was captured, over 45 hectares of land were cleared off hashish plantations, 176 hashish centres were sealed and 57 gangs involved in cultivation and spread of hashish and opium were apprehended. The figure is indicative that the state of Afghanistan is for the soonest elimination of narcotics in the country and the world at large so that the people can live a life away for the nightmare of narcotics. [sentence as published]

Mujahidin Arms Depot Blown Up

92AS0715D Kabul THE KABUL TIMES
in English 2 Jan 92 pp 1, 4

[Text] A big depot of weapons and ammunition of jamiat was exploded when a mine planted by the rival groups went off in Kishm north east of Kunduz province.

As a result two guards were killed and two others wounded, while the ammunition including 800 surface-to-surface missiles, 600 shells of recoilless 500 mortar mines, 300 rocket launchers and 15 boxes of Kalashnikov bullets were destroyed.

The local residents of the areas fled their houses and went to other areas as the flying missiles inflicted huge material losses on them.

Similarly four kg. of explosives were detected and seized by the personnel of the state security ministry in Char Asiab district.

The explosives were planted by the armed opposition groups for acts of explosion in Kabul city.

According to another report the personnel of the state security ministry bought a surface-to-surface rocket of strila-2 from opposition group in Badakhshan province recently. (BIA)

Benihesar-Shiwaki Road To Be Repaired

92AS0715C Kabul THE KABUL TIMES
in English 7 Jan 92 p 4

[Article: "Road To Be Repaired"]

[Text] The re-macadamization and repair of Benihesar-Shiwaki road will soon begin, as per the demand by the residents of Shiwaki region, Bagrami district, Kabul province.

Haji Abdul Azim, President of Rasoul, and Amin trading house donated Afs.[Afghanis]7,350,000 for the repair of this road and pledged to pay the boarding and lodging expenses of the personnel of the Ministry of Mines and Industries who will repair this road.

Meanwhile the residents of the above region have expressed their readiness to help the repair of the said road. (BIA)

Chamber of Commerce Lends Credit for Imports

92AS0715B Kabul THE KABUL TIMES in English
6 Jan 92 p 2

[Article: "3131 Million Given as Credit for Commodities Import"]

[Text] In the past nine months of the current year the chamber of commerce and industries of the Republic of Afghanistan lent Afs.[Afghanis]2200 million as credit for import of oil Afs. 731 million for import of foodstuffs, Afs. 200 million for export of Karakul pelt in easy terms to be the national traders and entrepreneurs, said a concerned spokesman, the chamber he added has waived the commission to be charged on import of oil and wheat and while the commission on import of some other primary goods including flour, rice, sugar, milk, ghee, tea, salt, soap and medicine has been given a discount from 1.5 percent to 0.5 percent.

With the financial assistance of the chambers, two bakeries were set up in the Kabul city as well as while two others are to be set up in the near future also in the Kabul city. (BIA)

NEPAL

New Panchayat-Based Party Said To Retain Image

92AS0662D Kathmandu *THE MOTHERLAND*
in English 11 Feb 92 p 3

[Editorial: "The Merger"]

[Text] After over a year of infighting, former panchas who flocked to the two political parties opened by former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Bhaadul Chand have concluded their longstanding merger attempts. Considering that the two parties combined collected nearly thirteen percent of the total votes cast in the last general elections under very adverse situation, the merger is no doubt potent. Also, considering that the party so far represents the bulk of the former Panchayat leadership at the centre, this collection of experienced politicians can claim, as they do, the option for public choice in Nepal's democracy which is genuinely seeking options at the moment and is desperate for the lack of any in an effort to strengthen the democratic structures of multi-partyism brought about by the mass agitation.

Having said this though, the merger will definitely have raised as many questions as it will have answered. Leadership preference which did contribute to the flocking of workers to either one or the other party will not have been that easily cast aside by the workers merely because of the success of the attempt at the top to unite. There is a likelihood that the merger—the sharing of portfolios, et. al.—could spur major disgruntlements and scare workers away from the party as much as it may, on the contrary, also help attract workers to the party. The RPP [Rastriya Prajatantra Party] has yet to cast aside its image of former political warlords with some or the other constituency joining hands to regain political authority with little interest in the grassroots.

New Political Party Said To Have No Base

92AS0662B Kathmandu *THE RISING NEPAL*
in English 11 Feb 92 p 4

[Article by Mukti Rijal: "Proposed Democratic Alternative Party: How Much of an Alternative"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The local press reports that a new political party is in the offing. The party to be formalised soon has received wider press coverage owing to the fact that political stalwarts like Matrika Prasad Koirala, Kirtinidhi Bista, Sribhadra Sharma and Parashu Narayan Choudhary have banded together to launch this political venture.

Important Role

The political figures united for the "would be" political party had a very important role in different political positions during the erstwhile Panchayat dispensation. Matrika Prasad Koirala, though he did not hold any

ministerial position during the deposed Panchayat rule, was a tested adherent of the partyless Panchayat ideology.

The first non-Rana prime minister after the revolution of 1950, Koirala had been an executive leader of the Nepali Congress and also remained an associate of the Indian freedom struggle. He was trained in politics through his association with the political schools and celebrities inspired by Mahatma Gandhi.

However, Koirala dissociated himself from the Nepali Congress as he was charged with selling out the avowed principles of the Nepali Congress to serve his own ends and ambitions. The differences between the late B.P. Koirala and Matrika Koirala had led to the split in the democratic Nepali Congress.

The widely-publicised differences between B.P. and M.P. Koirala resulted in the parting of their political alignments and persuasion. The late B.P. Koirala led the Nepali Congress with a matchless sagacity and statesmanship whereas Matrika Koirala deviated from the democratic ideology pursued by the Nepali Congress to hobnob with those opposed to the democratic development of the Nepalese society.

As regards Sribhadra Sharma and Parashu Narayan Choudhary they had been general-secretaries of the Nepali Congress at different times. Sharma had been the general secretary of the Nepali Congress at a time when the party was voted to power in the historic general elections based on multiparty competition. But Sharma delinked himself from the Nepali Congress and collaborated with the deposed Panchayat dispensation as a result of which he could occupy the ministerial position for a brief stint.

However, in the national referendum and other critical moments Sharma had demonstrated his bent on the democratic transformation of Nepalese politics contrary to dictates of the authoritarian Panchayat ideology.

During the last general elections Sharma threw his gauntlet in favour of the Nepali Congress and lent his support to the Congress nominees from the Tanahun district. Sharma is said as being instrumental in conceiving the new democratic party and seeking concurrence from political stalwarts as Bista, Koirala and so on. As an architect of the new political party scheduled to be launched in the ensuing Democracy Day, Sharma has made the proposed party's stands known on several important issues.

A perusal of the statements and interviews by Sribhadra Sharma on behalf of the proposed party shows that the political venture initiated by them intends to offer a non-communist alternative to the Nepali Congress.

In an interview published a few months ago, Sharma had argued that the communists cannot offer democratic alternative as, according to him, their faith in democratic process is yet to be tested.

Another co-architect of the proposed party, Kirtinidhi Bista, has echoed a similar tone in an interview published recently and emphasised that the party committed to the democratic process can play a significant role irrespective of the symmetry and strength in the Parliament.

Bista has broached that they have received support from different quarters to launch the new democratic political party. The difference between Matrika Koirala and Sharma on the one hand and Bista on the other is that Bista comes from the stock of politicians who climaxed their political career during the panchayati regime and played a crucial role in authoring its policies and programmes. He is regarded as a key figure to devise the foreign policy direction of Nepal during the panchayat regime.

Though claimed by the authors of the proposed party, could it succeed to evolve as an alternative democratic organisation? The authors of the proposed party should, however, not over-look the fact that the CPN (UM-L) [Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxists and Leninists] has come to terms with democratic context and modified many of its stereotyped principles and dogmas.

It has offered competition to the ruling party—the Nepali Congress—in every respect and enjoys legitimacy as the partner of the latter to smash the partyless Panchayat dispensation. Its countrywide organisational base cannot be dismissed as insignificant.

The CPN (UM-L) has rightfully claimed in its pronouncements that no other political organisation than itself holds the potency and legitimacy to stand as an alternative force to the ruling party.

But C.P. Mainali, a politbureau member of the CPN (UM-L) has more than once agreed that the country needs a democratic progressive political organisation. Such a force can emerge out of the elements that have fought for the democratic and progressive rights of the people.

A Mainali aide, Tanka Karki, who is the president of the 'Peoples Forum for Democracy' in an article published recently has lambasted both Nepali Congress and CPN (UM-L) for failure to act earnestly as per the trust reposed on them by the people.

He, therefore, sees the need of a democratic progressive force capable of taking care of the democratic and progressive sentiments of the people which the former Panchayat elements cannot do through securing popular support and legitimacy, no matter their unity and conglomeration for the sake.

The authors of the proposed party and others concerned should not underestimate the strength of the national democratic parties led by Thapa and Chand. The coming together of both the parties has emboldened them to work with greater encouragement. The securing of the percentage of the votes needed to maintain the status of a national party by each of them separately during the

last multiparty general elections speaks of the strength of the national democratic parties though they hold a very negligible seats in the Parliament.

Appendage of NDP [National Democratic Party]

Frankly speaking, the proposed party, considering the orientation it has and the class it seeks to represent, bears a host of commonalities with the united National Democratic Party. From the popular angle it will be perceived as an appendage of the National Democratic Party and its aspiring for an alternative democratic force would go haywire.

Problems of Administering Tribhuvan University Examined

92AS0662C Kathmandu *THE RISING NEPAL*
in English 1 Feb 92 p 4

[Article by Gyan Rai: "After the Report, What?"]

[Text] 'According to the Information Department of the Tribhuvan University [TU], a five-member task force, ostensibly to systemise and update the existing services, conditions and facilities of the teachers and staff members of the university, has been constituted.

Furthermore, the task force is to submit its report in three months after studying different academic, administrative and technical services and level of services, service conditions and facilities of the teachers and staff of the University.

General Impression

Coming as it does immediately in the wake of the revelation by the Tribhuvan University Council of its estimated budget, expenditures, the assistance from the government, the shortfalls in its budget for implementing the necessary programmes as well as in its intention of allocating the meagre income from the raised tuition fees on the basis of academic priorities of the numerous campuses throughout the country, the general impression that any person following the TU scene could discern that the TU authorities, after a long lapse of time, seems to be heading somewhere finally.

Similarly, what should be also recalled here is that ever since the new team, headed by the new Vice-Chancellor of the university, Mr Kedar Bhakta Mathema, was installed at the helm of the varsity's affairs, the people, particularly the guardians and students studying in its various faculties, had expected some improvement in terms of programmes and other initiatives, to be forthcoming from it.

But its very first major measure—that is, the raising of the tuition fees—almost threw the new team into an unending controversy, with the local papers carrying stories lambasting the TU authorities for having the nerves to hike the fees when, as they argued, the need of the hour was to, among others, come up with some other programmes.

Apart from this, the decision also apparently stirred the hornet's nest in the form of the ever present numerous splintered student groups to the extent that they came

out with vociferous clamorings against the TU authorities measure. Likewise, they even appealed to the students about to join the varsity's numerous campuses to boycott the admission procedures to let their "displeasure" know to the new team which dared to initiate the "unpleasant" step—that is, rising [as published] the fees.

Fortunately for the new team, its appeal to the students to mull over the decision to hike the tuition fees against the background of the university's current problems, especially in the sphere of finance, as well as its intention of using the income forthcoming from the increase of the same to improve the physical infrastructures of the various campuses under its jurisdiction, notwithstanding the "harden" postures taken up by the numerous splintered student groups, went down well with them. Also, the expected mayhem that some of the local papers predicted that would take place in the academic sphere, much to their chagrin, never materialised.

The latest step, that is, the constitution of a five-member task force, has forced some of those persons following the TU affairs closely to ask themselves: had the success of the new team to calm the passions of the students in the immediate wake of its decision to hike the tuition fees emboldened it further to come up with its latest measure—the formation of the new task force?

Whatever be the reason(s) behind the TU authorities for the same, what the new team should take into mind is that the failure of the students, more particularly the splintered student groups, to throw a spanner into the scheme (the hiking of tuition fees) should not be construed as weakness but, on the contrary, as the students' ability to see the current problems besetting the university as a whole in the right perspective. In other words, their tacit support to the new team to, among others, carry out its prior announced programmes like, for example, raising the quality of education that is presently being imparted in its campuses and the bringing of some semblance of order in its otherwise chaotic academic affairs.

And needless to say, to bring out the realisation of the students' expectations as well as the success of the TU authorities' own prior announced plans and programmes, cooperation from all those involved in the university's activities, be they in the academic field or otherwise, is very essential.

But cooperation also entails that the perceived anomalies and the felt discrepancies currently besetting the other half of the essential component of the varsity, that is, the teaching staff and its supporting group like the administrative wing, should be resolved.

It goes without saying that in this particular area, the TU authorities would be needing all its acumen and sagacity to tackle and, where the need arises, to clean this Augean stable that it has had to reduce to over the past many years.

And the scenario obtaining presently in this area is far from satisfactory. For one, the academicians and teachers are obviously a much harassed lot, especially when we take into consideration the ratio of one teacher to the students in one class in any one of the numerous campuses under the TU's jurisdiction. This can be borne out by the very news, obviously emanating from the TU itself, that over 210,000 students are currently geared up or have started, to give their examinations in the various levels of the different faculties.

While no one knows the exact number of teachers that are currently imparting knowledge and skills to this vast army of students studying in the TU's campuses and faculties in the nation, the very fact that the classes are invariably filled to capacity is a clear indication that the ratio of a teacher to the students is way beyond what any sane university would like to experience. Or, for that matter, to, prescribe.

With such lopsided situation obtaining in the campuses, how would the TU authorities be able to impart the necessary knowledge and skills, leave alone raising the quality of education in its campuses, is a million rupee question. Moreover, the physical facilities and infrastructures are so woebegonely inadequate that it is not unusual to see some students even sitting on the aisles or standing outside the very classrooms, not to speak of the tremendous pressures exerted on the equally inadequately stocked laboratories and similar facilities, especially in those campuses imparting scientific knowledge and skills.

And as if to add fuel to the ongoing problems being faced by the teaching community, their facilities for, among others, to live a reasonably affordable life, are, to say the least, abysmal. If this is to continue, the moral of the teachers would be affected in the long run. And needless to say, this would in turn deter them in giving their best in terms of quality education, to their students when, it may be recalled here, the TU authorities are shouting themselves hoarse in the necessity of raising the quality of education.

It is clear that the oldest and the foremost university is indeed in need of some drastic shock therapy if it is to bring some orderliness in its academic, or otherwise, activities. Such similar remedy would also be apparently necessary to streamline the administration of the university which, as it has now become an open secret is bloated out of proportion. And these are just some of the problems that are seen to be besetting the university by an ordinary layman.

And one curious question that is obviously intriguing many an observer of the TU affairs is: why is it that every year the expenditure of the university is increasing whereas the quality of the education that is being imparted by its teaching staff is not improving to the desired extent? The question is, undoubtedly, not easy to answer. Nor would the question be resolved by simply making the increasingly eager students, whose tribe

seems to be rising with the passing of each year, seeking admission in the limited seats of the campuses, the whipping boy.

Without an iota of doubt, the newly constituted five-member task force would be coming up with some eye-opening findings while it is going about in fulfilling its mandated duties. And naturally, they would be included in its report after the stipulated time, that is, three months.

Crux of the Question

The crux of the question is: would the new team that is heading the TU affairs presently be able to implement the suggestions that would obviously be included in the report by the task force? While it remains to be seen what the new team would be doing with the report in the coming months ahead, it would not be a surprise if the report would be incorporating some bitter prescriptions. Or, would the new team be afflicted by a Hamlet-like predicament when the time comes to implement the suggestions in the report.

Television Broadcast Capabilities Reviewed

92AS0662A Kathmandu *THE RISING NEPAL*
in English 2 Feb 92 p 4

Editorial: "NTV's Seven Years"]

[Text] Nepal Television [NTV] has entered its eighth year. Its achievements so far have been quantitative rather than qualitative. It claims that its programmes are watched by 23 percent of the population that has a total number of about 250,000 sets. When the station was established seven years ago it had begun very modestly including only the Kathmanduites in its audience list. It quickly established two more transmission centres in the east and west of the capital running the same news programmes aired by Kathmandu but was able to do so only a few days later. So much so that a Biratnagar function had to be aired in Kathmandu before it was shown to the Biratnagar audience, which was not possible till two or three days later by which time the news would have reached the height of absurdity. They have joined Biratnagar to the central transmission and the problem is over now. But the visual reception there is so poor that the people there are more used to programmes coming from across the borders, from India and even Bangladesh, that NTV is like a foreign station to them whose telecasts are never certain. Sometimes it is one of the relay towers on the mountain tops that are blamed and mostly it is the way they function.

The problem with NTV is not with inaction; it has been very active these seven years. It is rather with the targets it has been fixing for itself to fulfil. One of the fundamentals of the *raison d'être* of the station is to be able to build a national opinion on events and developments. Depending on foreign stations to do the job will also mean that we will not be having any say when we want our message to reach the people who will have had the

habit of listening to others, even if what they are listening to is contrary to what the country is experiencing.

In the initial years the TV officials proudly asserted that in a short span of time it had been able to air more than 80 percent domestic programmes, something not even veterans in the field were able to achieve after decades of coming into existence. True, but what about quality? This question, perhaps, gave rise to the number of foreign programmes we see these days. Even then, they appear as repetitions of the programmes that have already been watched by the viewers in some other channel. As for opinion building, NTV has entered into agreements with other stations like the BBC and CNN to include them in the prime time telecast. Expecting Doordarshan next on NTV may not be a far-fetched idea at all. What is most surprising is that the stations have their own satellites and do not need the help of NTV to relay their signals to the audience. In fact these stations are NTV's competitors and not friends. It seems that NTV is slowly being pushed out by its founding fathers for other stations to take up the channel.

The first task for the national station would be to get its signals across to the widest possible audience loud and clear. Second, it should promote professionalism in the programmes so that quality does not become a foreign idea. Third, when foreign programmes are aired they should be first dubbed in the national language with unnecessary parts edited for relevance. And finally, national opinion is something that should not be fettered by anyone, most of all by a medium that is supposed to be the most powerful.

Commentaries Review New Five-Year Economic Plan

Too Free Market Oriented

92AS0661A Kathmandu *THE RISING NEPAL*
in English 14 Feb 92 p 4

[Article by Dr. Ramesh Manandhar: "Set Development Right"]

[Text] The Eighth Plan like other plans is well intentioned and based on the same fallacy as before, that the only solution to development is based on economic growth. The new development philosophy is based on free market and sustained economic growth which, in my opinion, is impossible.

Sustainable Development

If you want sustainable development, you have to forgo growth. This is also the conclusion of a Senior Economist at the Environment Department of the World Bank. He argues that politically, it is very difficult to admit that economic growth, with its connotations of ultimate goodness, must be limited.

Sustained economic development is impossible without degradation of the environment and increasing the disparity between the rich (haves) and the poor (have-nots).

What is lacking in the plan is the concept of development itself. It seems to have embraced the fad of economic development as the only way out of the present human sufferings of the poor people of Nepal both in urban and rural areas. There is no mention throughout the plan for a need for spiritual development and the important role the culture plays in cushioning the harmful impacts of development.

Nepal may be poor economically; it is a rich nation culturally and spiritually. Nepal is a capital-intensive country with rich terraced fields, beautiful buildings, landscape, rich architectural heritage and smiling people. And their culture is also our wealth. The problem comes when the wealth of the nation is translated into the GNP [gross national product]: Nepal lags far behind as one of the least developed nations of the world.

The emphasis on GNP is changing with the United Nations recently stressing on the Human Development Index (HDI) as a better measure of the state of the nation than the GNP. Within the development of HDI, there is a greater push for non-economic indicators. From 1991 onwards, political freedom has been included as an important aspect of the Human Development Index.

It is believed that the United Nations Human Development Index will slowly incorporate other human factors like human happiness, sharing and giving, cultural progress, etc., (which we still are relatively rich in). Why forgo these in the name of economic development?

It is a matter of concern to see that the foundation of culture on which our society stood for so many generations is shaken and in some cases destroyed. Frankly speaking, the traditional culture of our societies are mostly maintained and nurtured by the poor.

When people become rich, they are so blinded with financial gains and greed that they forget that human beings' basis of sustenance is not only economical but also cultural and psychological as well.

The Plan should take a lead and be explicit to the fact that we are not so concerned with the level of economic development or the GNP and try to move away from the market-based growth oriented strategies pursued by the capitalist countries if the Plan has a genuine concern for the majority of the poor.

Globally, whether in rich or in poor countries, the problems of poverty persist and this is escalating especially in poor countries. There are no major gains with the present capitalist policies in the footprint of the industrialised countries.

Nepal should continue on the path of development shown by B.P. Koirala and Mahatma Gandhi, (this may isolate Nepal from the rest of the world for some time

and thus reduce the foreign aid). But this is the price one has to pay for true democracy, a freedom from within.

The Plan should have a focus on grassroots decentralization and democracy, giving power to the people within their own communities (swaraj). In this position, people will be in a position to decide whether they wish to follow economic growth or equity.

In such a situation, there will be a combination of both. There will be economic growth but participated in by the masses and not one at the cost of the other.

Political autonomy within communities is crucial for self-development.

The Plan suggests the establishment of the National Land Resource and Establishment Centre within the National Planning Commission in order to initiate land use planning and develop monitoring systems to guide the proper use of land, water, forests, resources for environmental protection and management. Such a centre will be a useful addition to the government bureaucracy and will help generate useful data on a regular basis for planning.

Most of the time, it is not the data that is lacking but the ability and commitment to use the data towards meeting the needs of the people. Besides, there is a need for a freedom of information (access to data) for the public that should be addressed by the Plan.

Legislation is important in land use planning but it is often the case that there are loopholes. For example, the radical Urban Land Ceiling Act of India became a mere joke (as it accomplished very little) when rich people manipulated the Act to suit their needs. Also, the Land Reform Act of Nepal has yet to deliver its promises to the poor. The Plan needs to provide direction towards radical policies that can be effectively implemented.

The Eighth Plan has a stronger push for rural development as a panacea for Nepal's development problems but it seems to have ignored the empirical findings that rural development further leads to rapid urbanisation and that urbanisation is inevitable in the context of developing countries when our human values are geared towards material development and satisfaction of increasing wants.

Today, the world is coming to grips to the fact that 'urbanisation, traditionally seen as an evil, is responsible for economic growth of developing and developed nations. Cities are being recognised as the economic powerhouse of nations. [quotation marks as published]

There is still a myth in the plan that urbanisation can be checked through various policies of the government. It is often the case in developing countries that the more the restrictive policies, the more the loopholes and hence the more the red tapism and corruption.

What is needed is recognition that urbanisation in the Nepal's context is also inevitable and that in the next

twenty years or so, about half of the population of Nepal will become urbanised. The Plan should thus reflect policies of urban development in the context of this rapid migration and provide directions for the growth of large cities like Kathmandu, Biratnagar and Pokhara.

The Plan needs specially to address how to solve the problems of the urban poor, who will constitute the majority in urban areas in the next few years. In fact, there is also a rapid urbanisation of villages in recent years with the rural people becoming increasingly dependent upon urban goods. How to cope with such a rapid urbanisation of cities and villages?

The Plan does mention access to land for the urban poor but falls short of coming up with the policies in order to implement such a plan. Similarly, housing and building codes, housing loans, infrastructural development and building skills upgrading programme are all fine statements that were also seen in previous plans. The question remains: how many such plans have really benefited the poor and the needy and how many were seriously implemented?

Despite the current government's commitment to the poor, the urban poor were recently evicted by force using brutal means like bulldozers in Kathmandu. This only shows that there is a lack of proper action-oriented plans and programmes and political commitment to address the housing needs of the urban poor. It is also said that there is currently a national review going on the question of how to solve the problems of squatters of Nepal.

It is hoped that the government makes a commitment not to evict any squatter without providing alternative arrangements for accommodation. This is widely accepted in the United Nations and by many countries of the world, both developing and the developed.

The real issues of Nepal of the future will be the problem of exploding cities of poor people amidst a few rich people in a seriously degraded environment threatening the lives of the poor. The urban problems will dominate over the rural ones.

Homelessness and landlessness will escalate leading to popular struggles for housing rights. A piecemeal approach will not solve anything. The project approach of building few showpieces of housing will only escalate housing problems. The government should be an "enabler" and not any more "provider" of housing.

The Plan should address these problems now so that we do not have to go through the same mistakes that other countries went through. We may have a comparatively lower percentage of urban population today, but our rate of urbanisation is quite high especially towards large cities like Kathmandu.

This has escalated the land prices especially in Kathmandu that can be compared to the downtown Bombay or central parts of Melbourne. In such an escalating land

prices, how can poor people find a piece of land to put a roof over the head unless they grab the land illegally?

Generalistic Statements

Overall, the Plan is a collection of generalistic statements well-intentioned but lacking seriously in confronting the real issues of the future. Especially in housing and urban development policies, there is a serious lack of foresight and an understanding of urbanisation and development issues. If the Plan cannot tackle these issues now, the future looks bleak.

Too Many Government Controls

92AS0661B Kathmandu *THE RISING NEPAL*
in English 4 Feb 92 p 4

[Article by Siddhi Ranjitkar: "Government Intervention Persists"]

[Text] The National Planning Commission has circulated a draft approach paper for the Eighth Plan, and has requested suggestions from the public for incorporation in the final approach paper.

New Techniques

The draft approach paper expresses the differences between previous plans and the Eighth Plan in the following words: "In previous plans a GDP [gross domestic product] growth rate target was exogenously specified at the beginning of the planning process. The economic planning methodology underlying the formulation of the Eighth Plan uses new techniques which are intended to avoid the shortcomings of previous plans. Instead of estimating a single, aggregate ICOR [Incremental Capital Output Ratio], sectoral ICORs have been estimated on the basis of sectoral data and lag structures which serve as proxies for sector-specific investment gestation periods."

A GDP growth of 5.1 percent during the plan period is envisioned. This growth rate in turn expected to generate 3 percent annual employment.

A total gross investment of Rs.[rupees]189,537 million is estimated for the plan period. Of this amount, 59.7 percent is expected to be financed from the national saving, and the remaining 40.3 percent from foreign aid (9.3 percent grant and 31.0 percent loan). The private sector investment during the plan period is foreseen to be 67 percent of the total plan outlay.

Like previous plans, the Eighth Plan also emphasizes the agricultural sector, but the main focus is laid on the inputs. There is no mention of land reform or price support to enhance agricultural production. So the Nepalese farmers may continue to be in subsistence even after the Eighth Plan as they may have a least chance to be commercial farmers.

They have to be subsistence farmers in the absence of opportunities to cash their products whenever possible. Farmers will make decisions based on the opportunities and constraints they face.

The government control on the forestry sector may continue as it is. People may have the freedom to collect forestry products for many years to come. This is a subsidy to the rural people so that they can hold so many unproductive livestock. People may be encouraged to plant trees in some less productive agricultural land when incomes from trees will be higher than from the agricultural products. This becomes possible when people don't need to pay taxes on land. Land holdings have been encouraged because of the faulty land reform act of the previous regime.

The Eighth Plan also envisages government investments in power generation, telecommunications and audio-visual media. It is plain that the government investment only in these sectors will be difficult to satisfy the needs of the people.

Soon the Nepal Electricity Authority may have to adopt load-shedding because of the imbalance between power generation and demand. Shortages of telephone lines in Kathmandu have been already felt. Lack of private television and radio is denying the people the right of independent information which is so much important for the flourishing of democracy.

Private investments are primarily foreseen in the manufacturing and service industries only. So despite the rosy words of the present government to liberalize the economy, the country may have to move towards economic development due to sole government interventions.

The Eighth Plan envisages to invest 70 percent of the total plan outlay in rural development. This investment is directed to create social and physical infrastructure which are supposed to uplift the life of the rural people.

Presently most of the rural people are suffering from lack of market access to their surplus products. Often the local administration restricts the movement of the agricultural products, even when there are no prohibitions to move their products they have to face hassles. So rural infrastructure may hardly contribute to the betterment of the life of the people until such interventions are removed.

Economic Returns

The Eighth Plan approach paper mentions development of roads, trails, ropeways, water-ways and air transport. But the government policy that supports the economic returns of the already developed transport network and the future planned transport network is nowhere to be seen.

So far, government intervention in the economy has contributed to sluggish returns from the road transport

network. The transport network will contribute to the economic development of the country when people have the freedom to move their products nationwide.

The government foresees liberalization of trade; however, the plan maintains the needs of auctioning the import licensing, and export control on some items. Government control on the foreign currency remains as it is. Under-valuation of the foreign currency continues unchecked.

Although the government has good intentions to develop tourism, certain measures such as the mandatory exchange of foreign currency for stay in Nepal, drives some kind of tourists to other countries.

Such measures have to be taken because of the low value of the foreign currencies in comparison to the Nepalese rupee. The government has to change its monetary policy to favour the growth of the national economy.

There is no provision to make primary education mandatory to all school-age children, despite the fact the Nepali Congress Government strongly favours making primary education mandatory to all.

Although the plan document appreciates the needs of education to girl children in order to curtail the population growth, strong measures to educate the girl children are lacking in the plan document.

Regarding health services, the delivery system is seen to be kept intact, despite the fact that health services in the rural areas are poor. The intention to change the health delivery system is lacking in the plan document.

The plan document mentions the increase of food production to curb malnutrition. But the food balance sheet of the country clearly shows a surplus. So the evident malnutrition is due to low income of the people.

The plan document envisages to manage the supply of essential goods including the petroleum products. The control on supply and prices often distorts the market, and creates a parallel market. However, the government policy to retain its role in the supply of essential goods continues. This will, if mismanaged, discredit the government.

The approach to the Eighth Plan clearly has a vision of growth rate, poverty alleviation but a clear vision of the country after five years is lacking. The plan is input-oriented. It will make the people passive beneficiaries. Their active participation in economic development is lacking. Everyone will expect the planners and the implementers to do the jobs for them. It has not mentioned what the people have to do.

The government will continue to be the manager of service delivery. The government can do the job of promotive law and order better than service delivery. So the question may arise as to why the government should not relinquish the control and interventions in the economy in the interests of the people in general.

The government will be better off if it protects the people from monopoly of traders and manufacturers so that they may not exploit the consumers. When the government itself stands in the shoes of the traders and manufacturers, it hardly can see its shortcomings. It may benefit some people in power to gain authority and gain material benefits but it will spoil the image of political party that governs the country.

Better Job

Therefore, the government will do a better job when it relinquishes its interventionist role and move into a supportive role in the development of the national economy.

Population Control Falls Short

92AS0661C Kathmandu *THE RISING NEPAL*
in English 14 Feb 92 pp 1 (supplement)

[Article by Dr. Bhanu Niraula who is a sociological/demographer with APROSC (Agricultural Project Services Center); "Will the Plan Defuse the Population Bomb"; first paragraph is *THE RISING NEPAL* introduction]

[Text] The Eighth Plan is silent on mortality and migration, both important components of demographic process.

The interrelationships between population growth and economic development are well understood and well documented. Nepal is faced with the dual challenge of accelerating growth in its stagnant economy and reducing the population growth rates at the same time. In such a country, unchecked growth of population is a handicap for rapid economic development and transformation of the society. This fact is well recognized by the planning objectives of the approach paper to the Eighth Plan (National Planning Commission, 1991).

Making Them Have Less

From the policy point of view, population policies adopted by governments all around the world can be broadly classified into two groups: direct and indirect.

Implementation of programmes through intervention such as restrictions on the number of children a couple wants to have and restrictions on the migratory movements of people can be taken as an example of extreme policies that directly influence a population. Promotion of family planning methods can also be included in this category.

Programmes to improve health and sanitation, schooling and economic well-being, are examples of indirect population influencing policy.

A cursory look into the approach paper indicates that it has elements of both direct and indirect population influencing policies.

The size of a population is influenced by the dynamic processes of births, deaths and migration. Any population policy which does not relate to these components of the demographic process is incomplete.

It is here that the population policy is lacking. To a larger extent, the population policy contained in the approach paper to the Eighth Plan is peripheral in the sense that it is silent on mortality and migration, both important components of demographic processes. High mortality rates, especially infant and child mortality, and differential value attached to sex of children have been pushing the Nepalese couple towards having more children. Despite mention of mother and child health care delivery, the approach paper lacks specific strategic thrusts to reduce infant and child mortality.

Unless couples of childbearing age are assured that their children will survive to adulthood, it is unlikely that they will limit their family size to two children as envisaged in the approach paper. Pre-natal and post-neonatal health care should be the focus for reducing infant mortality, and obviously, this will also lead to reduction in high mortality rates among the mothers of childbearing age by improving the depletion syndrome in mothers' health. Programmes such as nutrition and breastfeeding should attract more attention if children are to be saved from avoidable deaths.

Improved spatial distribution of population should also form a component of population policy. To a larger extent, unequal distribution of population in different geo-ecological belts of the country and movement of people in search for better life from within and outside of the country has contributed to the depletion of natural resources such as forests causing environmental degradation. Not only the population policy but even the policy statement on environment fails to recognize the fact that people should learn to live in a more scattered manner.

It will only be wishful thinking on our part to wait for living standard of our people to improve through various economic development programmes which will "automatically" lead to a smaller family size. To wait for economic development to reduce fertility automatically is to lose time in fertility reduction programmes that will result in size of population beyond our comprehension and control.

Policy design involves specific knowledge of the interrelationships between socio-economic and population variables and an understanding of the strength and weaknesses of the institutions involved.

Historical evidence from Europe and Japan and contemporary evidence from Bangladesh, China and Indonesia shows that community participation is an important tool for regulating the demographic behaviours of the people in a responsible manner.

Such participation will put internal pressure on individuals to bring their behaviour in line with the interest of

the community and help in reducing the "tragedy of commons." It is in this line a two-pronged policy option has been envisaged: one policy directed to the community at large and the other directed to individuals at the same time. The community-level population policy envisages increased participation of the local community in social control over the demographic behaviour of its members, while the individual-level population options are directed at changing people's motivation towards small family size.

While laudable are the policy statements to involve local NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and community participation, the viability and success of such an endeavour will largely depend on the delegation of authority and strong support from the central government.

Lack of research on the functioning, skill and strengthening of the local initiative may put a barrier on the way to effective implementation of the policy objectives. It is to be seen how the government will formulate its policy on decentralization and what responsibilities are bestowed on various tiers of the government and the NGOs.

Structural mechanisms are important tools in implementing policy objectives. A national body to conduct research and training on interrelationships between demographic and socio-economic variables constantly, and to formulate policy and programmes, coordinate, implement and monitor these programmes effectively and uniformly is an important aspect of population planning.

The relevance of such a national body has been proved from the relative success of fertility reduction programmes in Thailand, Indonesia and Bangladesh.

Given that Nepal has entered a new era of democratic innovation, revitalization of the now defunct National Commission on Population with proper structural arrangements can fulfil this gap. It is hoped here that the recently formed national advisory committee on population under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister is a step in the positive direction.

In sum, the new political environment in the country is conducive for new initiatives in eradicating poverty and improving the living standards of the people.

END OF

FICHE

DATE FILMED

30 APRIL 1992